



3

# KASANE

d a r u m a  
m a t s u u r a

# KASANE

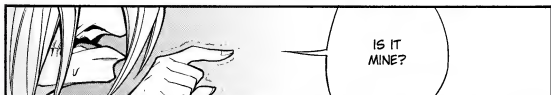


d a r u m a  
m a t s u u r a

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TO  
EMPHASIZE  
THE BEAUTY  
OF THIS  
FACE EVEN  
FURTHER.

I CHANGED  
MY MAKE-  
UP AND  
STYLE...



THAT  
MUCH  
...?



THANKS  
TO HER, I'VE  
BEEN ACTING  
AS HER  
ASSISTANT,  
EVEN THOUGH  
I'M A  
DIRECTOR!

I'm not  
even  
joking.

THEY'RE  
EVEN  
TALKING  
ABOUT A  
MOVIE.  
SHE'S  
A BUSY  
WOMAN.

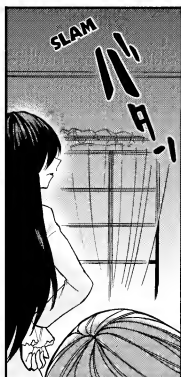
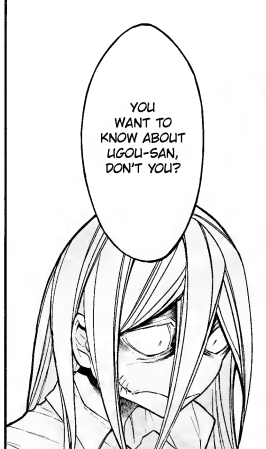
AND SHE'S  
GOTTEN  
RESULTS.  
AFTER THE  
SEAGULL,  
SHE GOT  
OFFERS FOR  
THREE MORE  
PLAYS.



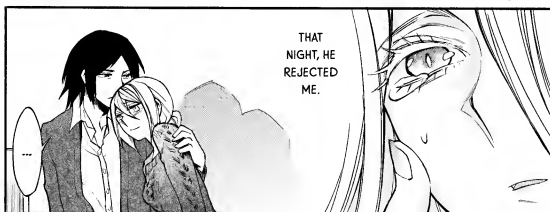
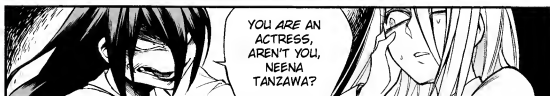
HER FACE  
MAY BE  
CUTE NOW,  
BUT HER  
PERSON-  
ALITY SURE  
ISN'T.

YEAH,  
YEAH.

BY THE  
WAY,  
HABUTA-  
SAN,  
WILL  
YOU GO  
HOME,  
NOW?  
I WANT  
TO GET  
CHANGED  
BEFORE  
I GIVE  
HER FACE  
BACK.











MOMMY  
...

...NEENA?  
I'M SORRY  
FOR  
CALLING  
YOU WHILE  
YOU'RE SO  
BUSY.

THE SEAGULL  
WAS AMAZING.  
I'M AMAZED  
YOU'VE COME  
THIS FAR.



I WAS SO  
WORRIED WHEN  
YOU RAN OUT,  
SAYING YOU  
WOULD FIGHT  
YOUR ILLNESS  
AND CONTINUE  
ACTING, BUT  
NOW, I'M  
FINALLY AT  
REST.

BEEP

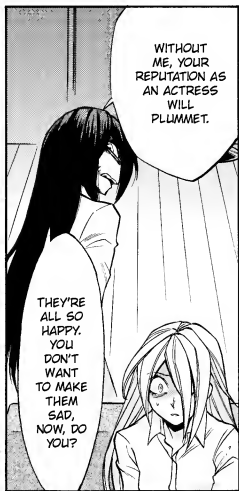
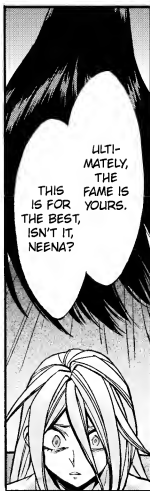
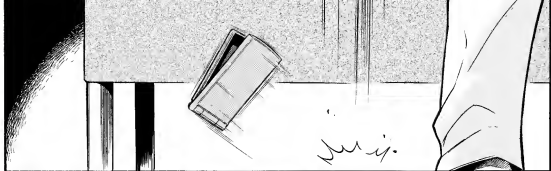
YOUR  
FATHER AND  
I ARE SO  
HAPPY TO SEE  
WHAT YOU'VE  
ACCOMPLISHED.  
WE'LL ALWAYS  
BE SUPPORTING  
YOU.



THESE  
ARE THE  
MESSAGES  
THAT CAME  
IN WHILE  
YOU WERE  
SLEEPING.

YOU  
SHOULD  
LISTEN  
TO  
THEM.












NEENA  
HERSELF  
WAS  
ASSAULTED  
BY EVER-  
MORE  
FREQUENT  
SLEEPING  
EPISODES,  
AND SPENT  
HER DAYS  
IN HER  
ROOM,  
IN THE  
DARK.

AND  
SO, AS  
THE  
NAME  
NEENA  
TANZAWA  
GREW  
EVER  
MORE  
FAMOUS  
...



AFTER THAT,  
KASANE  
PERFORMED  
IN A NUMBER  
OF PLAYS,  
REFINING  
BOTH HER  
BEAUTY  
AND HER  
ACTING.



NEENA'S  
VACANT SPELLS  
WERE MORE  
FREQUENT,  
OCCURRING  
EVEN WHEN SHE  
WAS AWAKE.

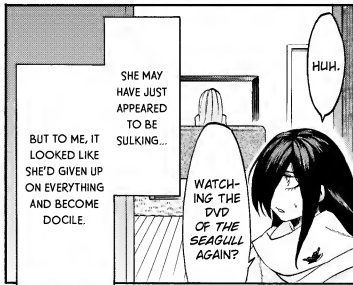
EVENTUALLY,  
A YEAR AND  
A HALF AFTER  
THE TWO HAD  
FIRST MET...



THEY'RE  
IN THE  
CLOSET  
BY THE  
DOOR...  
IN THE  
BLUE  
BOX.



NEENA,  
I WANT TO  
BORROW  
THOSE WHITE  
GLOVES THAT  
YOU WERE  
USING LAST  
YEAR.

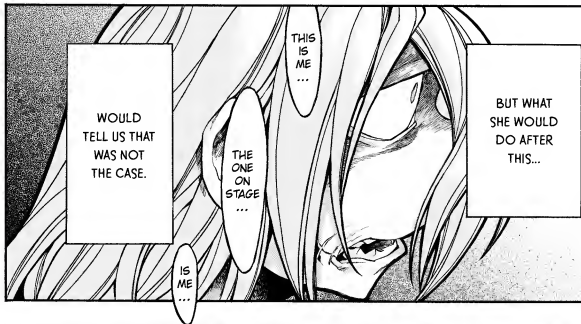


SHE MAY  
HAVE JUST  
APPEARED  
TO BE  
SULKING...

BUT TO ME, IT  
LOOKED LIKE  
SHE'D GIVEN UP  
ON EVERYTHING  
AND BECOME  
DOCILE.

HUH.

WATCH-  
ING THE  
DVD  
OF THE  
SEAGULL  
AGAIN?



WOULD  
TELL US THAT  
WAS NOT  
THE CASE.

THIS  
IS ME  
...

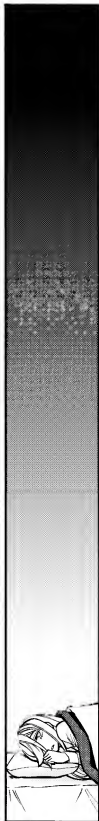
THE  
ONE ON  
STAGE  
...

BUT WHAT  
SHE WOULD  
DO AFTER  
THIS...

IS  
ME  
...



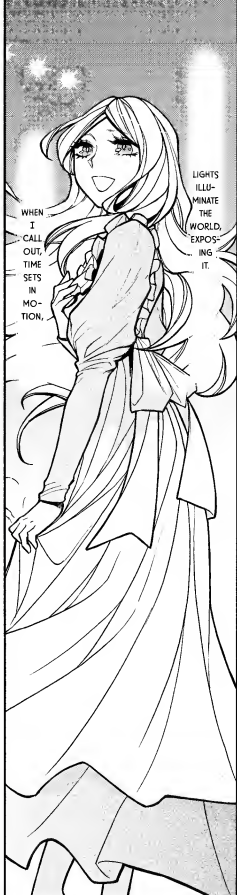
THE  
LIGHTS  
WILL SOON  
GO ON  
AGAIN.



COULD  
ANY-  
THING  
ELSE  
BE SO  
WON-  
DER-  
FUL?

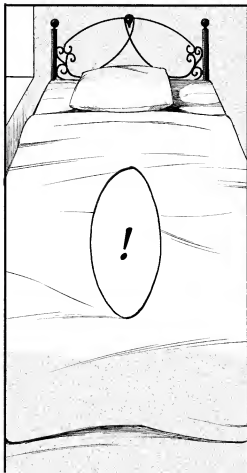
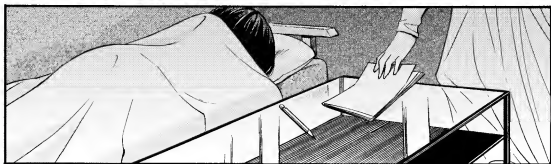


AND  
MY  
FORM  
WILL  
BE-  
COME  
A VIVID  
MEM-  
ORY  
WITH-  
IN  
EVERY-  
ONE.



WHEN  
I  
CALL  
OUT,  
TIME  
SETS  
IN  
MO-  
TION,

LIGHTS  
ILLU-  
MINATE  
THE  
WORLD,  
EXPOS-  
ING  
IT.





YEAH! RIGHT  
WHEN DRESS  
REHEARSALS  
ARE STARTING,  
TOO!

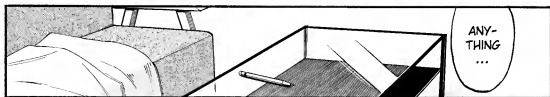


NEENA  
DISAP-  
PEARED  
?!



HAS  
ANYTHING  
ELSE  
CHANGED?  
LIKE, DID  
SHE TAKE  
ANYTHING  
WITH  
HER?

JUST  
CALM  
DOWN.

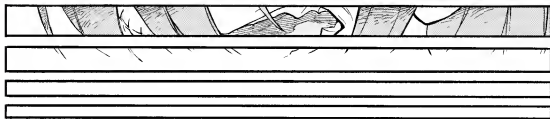


ANY-  
THING  
...



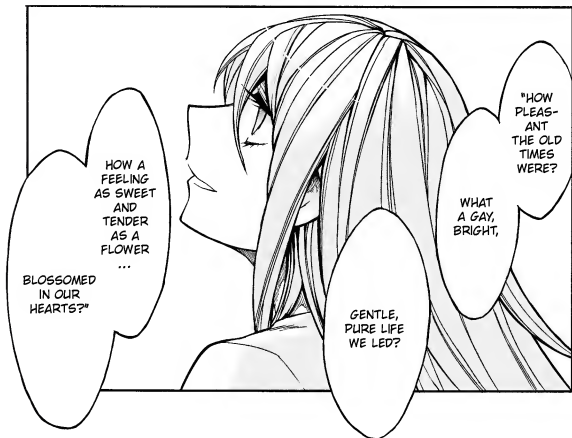
NO  
WAY...!

THE  
SCRIPT IS  
GONE.

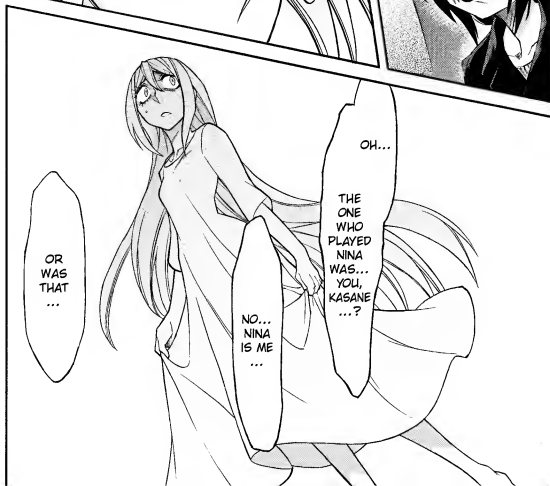


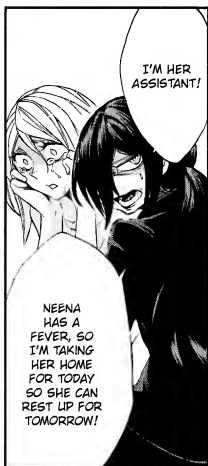












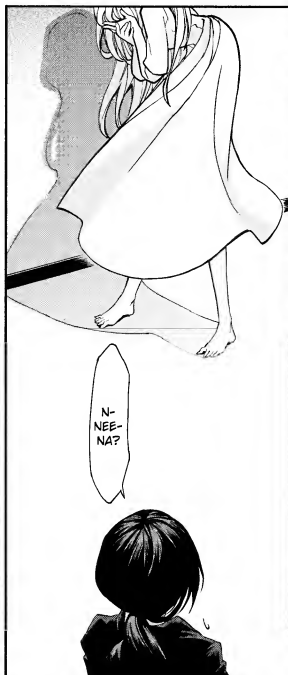
IT'S  
ALL  
YOUR  
FAULT I  
ENDED  
UP THIS  
WAY...

KA-  
SANE!

PANT

PANT

PANT



I'M NOT  
NINA OR  
NEENA  
TANZAWA  
ANYMORE

...  
I'M  
NO  
ONE!

I DON'T  
EXIST IN  
ANYONE'S  
MEMORIES!

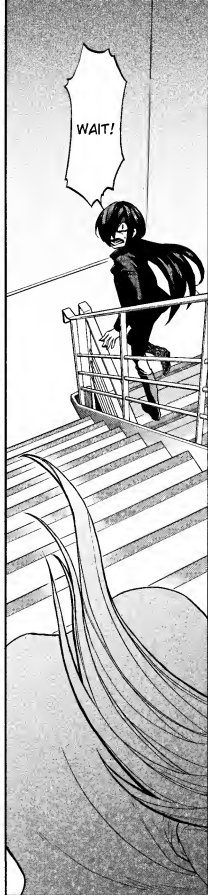




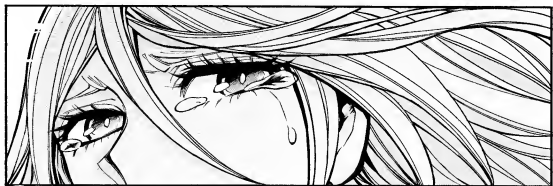


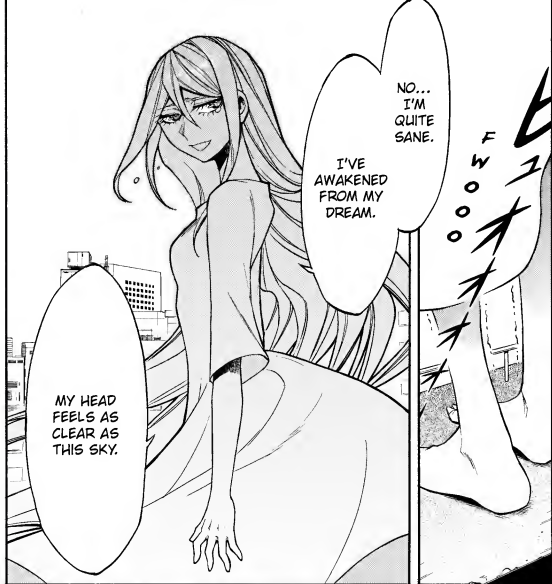
IS  
HABUTA-  
SAN NOT  
HERE  
YET?!

SHE'S  
NOT IN  
HER RIGHT  
MIND...



WAIT!





MY HEAD  
FEELS AS  
CLEAR AS  
THIS SKY.

NO...  
I'M  
QUITE  
SANE.

I'VE  
AWAKENED  
FROM MY  
DREAM.



I DIDN'T WANT  
ANYONE TO  
FORGET ME...

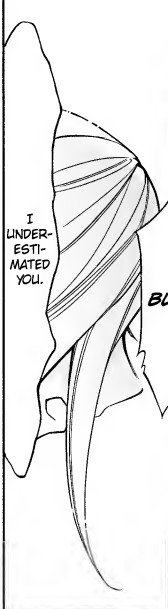


THAT'S  
WHY I  
THOUGHT,  
WHILE  
I WAS  
SLEEPING  
...  
YOU  
WOULD  
BRIDGE  
THOSE GAPS  
FOR ME.



WHEN  
I WOKE  
UP FROM  
MY SLEEP,  
EVERY-  
THING  
THAT WAS  
SUPPOSED  
TO HAVE  
COME  
BACK TO  
ME...

WAS  
STOLEN  
AWAY!



I  
UNDER-  
ESTI-  
MATED  
YOU.



THAT'S  
RIGHT!  
THAT'S WHY  
I'VE BEEN  
ACTING AS  
NEENA  
TANZAWA-

BUT...



ON YOUR  
ROAD TO  
BECOMING  
AN UNFOR-  
GETTABLE  
ACTRESS.

OUR  
NEXT  
SHOW  
IS AN IM-  
PORTANT  
STEP...

THE  
FAME  
IS ALL  
YOURS!

NEE-  
NA,





KASANE...  
YOU'RE AN  
AMAZING  
ACTRESS.

...

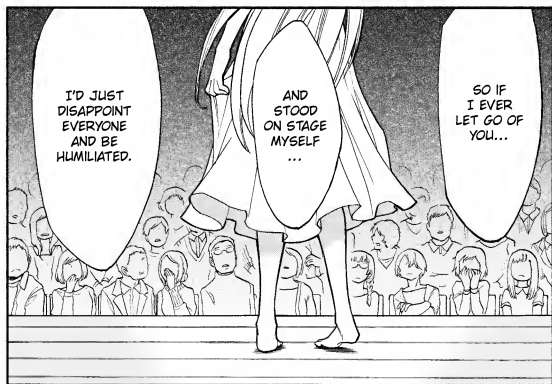


YOU,  
HABUTA-  
SAN...  
AND ME,  
TOO.

IT SURE  
SOUNDS  
NICE WHEN  
YOU PUT  
IT THAT  
WAY...BUT  
YOU'RE  
ALL JUST  
THINKING  
ABOUT  
YOUR-  
SELVES!



WHAT  
DO YOU  
MEAN, "ME"?  
WHAT DO  
YOU MEAN,  
"OUR NEXT  
SHOW"?





**I'M  
GOING  
TO KILL  
NEENA  
TANZAWA.**



**NOW  
THAT I'M  
UNNECESSARY,  
I'LL KILL  
MYSELF...**

**AND  
I'LL  
KILL  
YOU,  
TOO.**



**NEENA!**



"YOU  
CANNOT  
IMAGINE THE  
STATE OF MIND  
OF ONE WHO  
KNOWS AS HE  
GOES THROUGH  
A PLAY..."

HOW  
TERRIBLY  
BADLY HE  
IS ACTING."



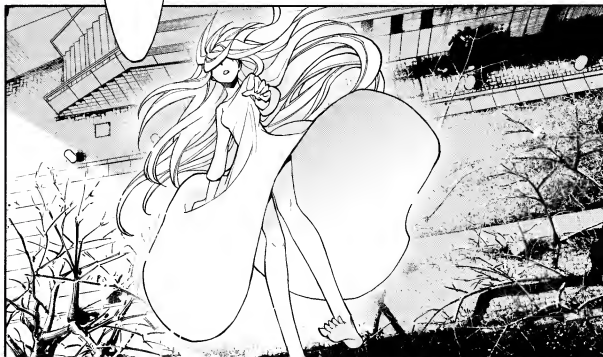
THAT'S  
...



**RUSH**

I...





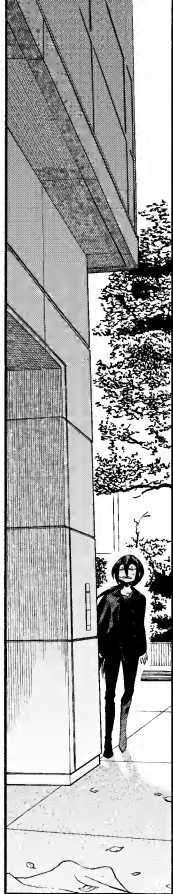


WHY?!

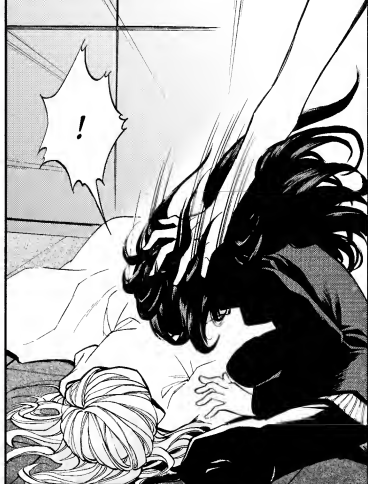
THUD

FLAP

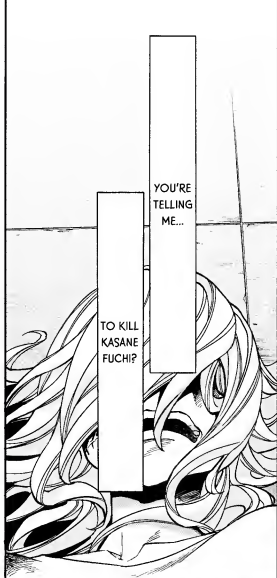
FLAP



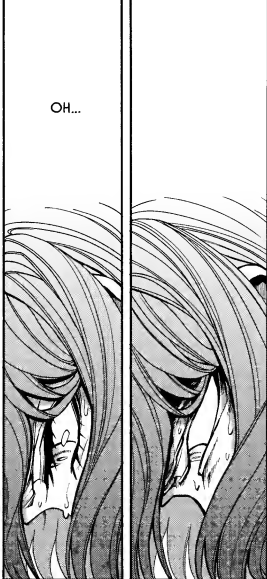








OH...







FATE...  
REPEATS  
ITSELF.

HA-  
BLITA-  
SAN?

IZA-  
NA  
...

THE  
NAME  
SLIPPED  
FROM  
MY  
LIPS.

\* THE TERM FOR "REPEAT" HERE INCLUDES THE CHARACTER IN KASANE'S NAME.

Chapter Twenty: Ulterior Motives







OPERATING ROOM









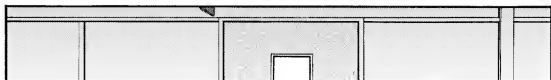
THAT'S  
A  
SHOCK.

SHE'S  
ALIVE.



THANK  
GOD  
...





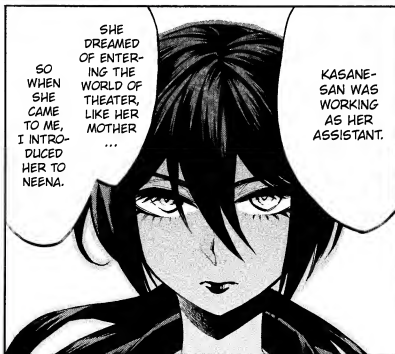


WHO'S  
THE  
YOUNG  
LADY?

Y-  
YES.  
BY  
THE  
WAY  
...



PLEASED  
TO MEET YOU.  
I'M NEENA  
TANZAWA.

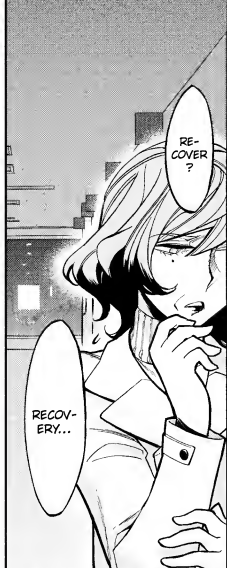


SHE  
DREAMED  
OF ENTER-  
ING THE  
WORLD OF  
THEATER,  
LIKE HER  
MOTHER  
...  
SO  
WHEN  
SHE  
CAME  
TO ME,  
I INTRO-  
DUCED  
HER TO  
NEENA.

KASANE-  
SAN WAS  
WORKING  
AS HER  
ASSISTANT.



SHE'S AN  
ACTRESS,  
ACTIVE IN  
THEATER  
AND FILM.



RE-  
COVER ?

RECOV-  
ERY...



WILL  
KASANE-  
SAN BE  
ABLE TO  
RECOVER?



OH!

SHE  
NEVER  
CONTACTED  
ME AT ALL,  
SO I DIDN'T  
HAVE THE  
SLIGHTEST  
CLUE.



IF HER  
COMA  
CONTINUES  
FOR MORE  
THAN  
THREE  
MONTHS  
...

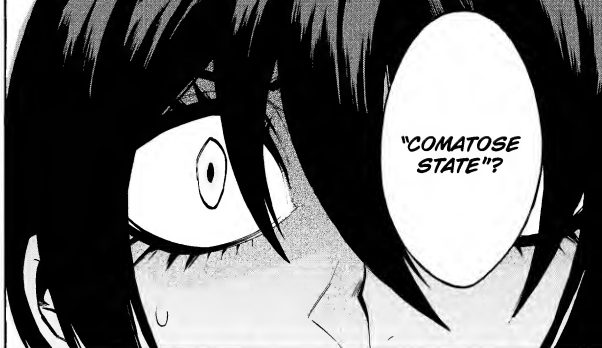
SHE  
WILL BE  
JUDGED  
TO BE IN A  
COMATOSE  
STATE.

AND  
EVEN IF  
SHE DOES,  
WE DON'T  
KNOW IF  
SHE CAN  
HAVE THE  
SAME LIFE-  
STYLE AS  
BEFORE.

THE  
DOCTOR  
SAYS  
SHE MAY  
OR MAY  
NOT  
WAKE  
UP.



MAY PROVE  
DIFFICULT.



**"COMATOSE  
STATE"?**



**BUT THE  
PROBLEM  
IS...**

**YES,  
THAT'S  
RIGHT.**

**THEN  
SHE MAY  
NEED  
CARE.**

**SHE JUMPED  
BECAUSE SHE  
WANTED TO DIE,  
DIDN'T SHE?**

**THE  
HOSPITAL  
MIGHT NOT  
LET HER  
STAY FOR  
MORE THAN  
THREE  
MONTHS.**



WHEN  
SHE  
WANTED  
TO DIE?

WOULD IT  
REALLY MAKE  
HER HAPPY  
TO FORCIBLY  
LENGTHEN  
HER LIFE...



NO!

YOU  
JUST  
WANT  
TO KILL  
ME!

IT'S  
BLATANTLY  
OBVIOUS YOU  
WANT TO GET  
YOUR HANDS ON  
MY MOTHER'S  
WILL WITHOUT  
GOING THROUGH  
THE TROUBLE  
OF TAKING  
CARE OF ME!



IT  
SEEMS IT'S  
POSSIBLE  
TO REFUSE  
ANY LIFE-  
PROLONGING  
TREATMENT  
...

IT WOULD  
BE HARD,  
BUT THAT  
MAY BE  
BEST, FOR  
HER SAKE.



HAVE  
YOU EVER  
ONCE  
DONE  
ANYTHING  
TO ACT AS  
A MOTHER  
TO ME?

YOU  
KICKED  
ME OUT  
OF THE  
HOUSE!



SHE  
DIDN'T DO  
WELL IN  
SCHOOL,  
AND  
DROPPED  
OUT,  
TOO...

AND I  
DON'T  
THINK I,  
ALONE,  
COULD  
MAKE UP  
FOR THE  
SADNESS  
SHE FELT  
WITHOUT  
HER  
MOTH-  
ER.

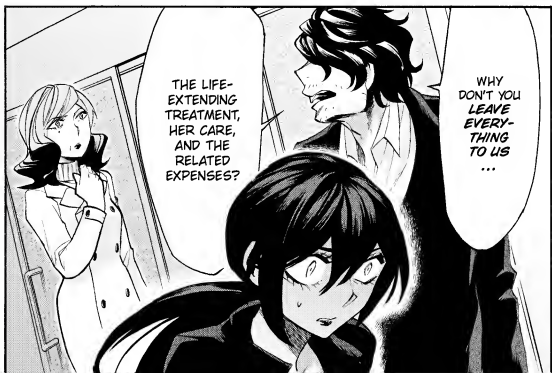




IS SHE ALL RIGHT ?



I RECOGNIZE THAT WE WON'T KNOW FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS, WELL ...



WHY DON'T YOU LEAVE EVERYTHING TO US ...





I'M  
SORRY. I  
APPRECIATE  
THE  
SENTIMENT  
...

BUT  
THIS IS  
A FAMILY  
ISSUE.



W-WELL,  
KASANE-SAN  
IS VERY  
IMPORTANT  
TO US, TOO.



YOU?!

WHY  
?!



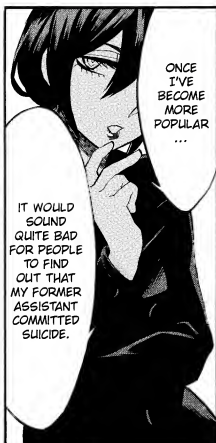
SHE'S SO FIXATED  
ON THE INHERITANCE,  
SMOOTH TALK WON'T  
BE ENOUGH TO  
CONVINCE HER.

IT  
WON'T  
WORK,  
HABUTA-  
SAN.

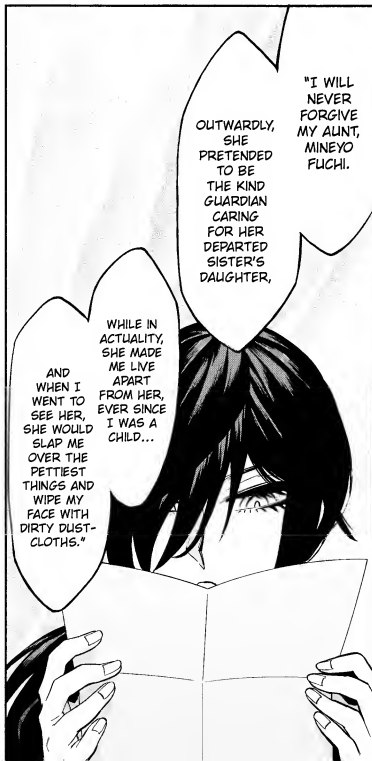


I BELIEVE  
THIS LADY WILL  
UNDERSTAND  
JUST HOW  
IMPORTANT IT  
IS TO KEEP UP  
APPEARANCES.

LET'S BE  
HONEST  
WITH EACH  
OTHER.

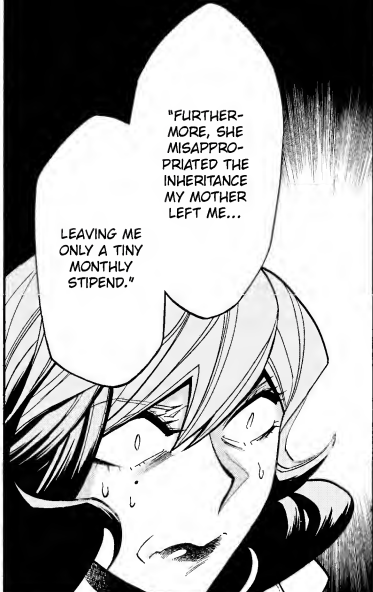








WH-  
WHAT  
IS...



"FURTHER-  
MORE, SHE  
MISAPPRO-  
PRIATED THE  
INHERITANCE  
MY MOTHER  
LEFT ME...

LEAVING ME  
ONLY A TINY  
MONTHLY  
STIPEND."



I FOUND  
IT TUCKED  
INTO MY  
BAG.

THIS IS  
KASANE  
FUCHI'S  
SUICIDE  
NOTE.





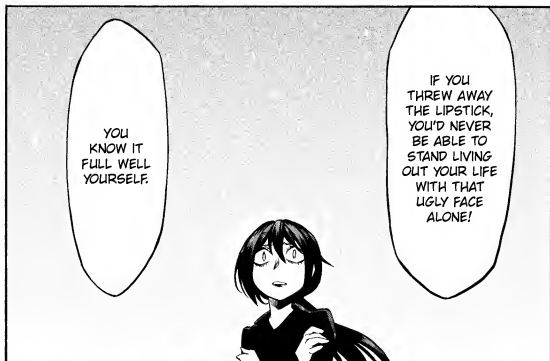


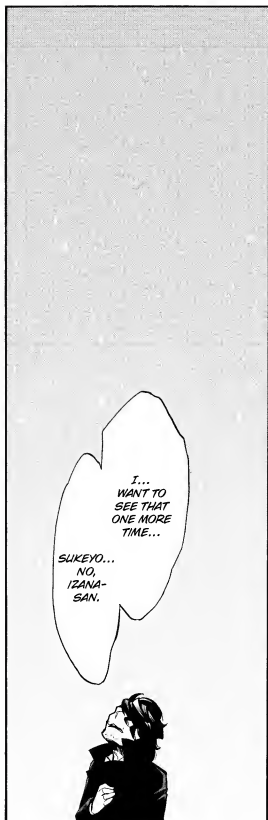






*IS THIS  
REALLY  
A GOOD  
IDEA?*





I...  
WANT TO  
SEE THAT  
ONE MORE  
TIME...

SUKEYO...  
NO,  
IZANA-  
SAN.



THAT  
WAS  
EXACTLY  
WHAT  
MADE  
HER SO  
EX-  
TREMELY  
BEAUTI-  
FUL.



SHE  
NEVER  
HESITATED  
LIKE  
THIS  
...

BECAUSE  
THE HELL  
SHE WENT  
THROUGH  
FOR BEING  
BORN UGLY  
COULDN'T  
EVEN  
COMPARE  
TO WHAT  
KASANE'S  
EXPERI-  
ENCED.

**KASANE**

Chapter Twenty-One: Repentance

ONE  
MONTH  
LATER...



BUT  
NEENA DIDN'T  
WAKE UP.

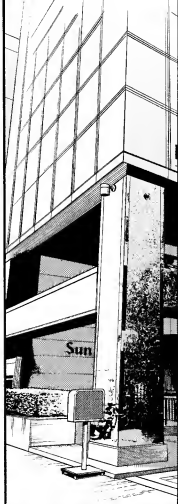
I WAITED  
AND  
WAITED...



I KEPT  
USING HER  
FACE TO  
GO ON  
STAGE.

WITHOUT YET  
HAVING FIGURED  
OUT WHAT I  
SHOULD DO...

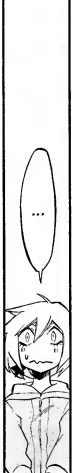
SEE  
YOU  
LATER.











IT'S  
PURELY  
PROFES-  
SIONAL.



BUT BACK  
THEN, I HADN'T  
SORTED OUT  
MY FEELINGS  
YET, SO I JUST  
KEPT TURNING  
HIM DOWN.



IT'S ONLY WHEN I'M WITH HIM THAT I CAN FORGET ABOUT THE BAD STUFF ...

I JUST HAVE SO MUCH FUN WITH HIM!



...



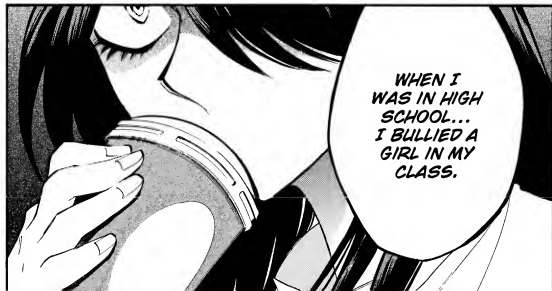
YEAH.



UM...  
WELL ...

HUH?

WHAT "BAD STUFF" ?



WHEN I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL... I BULLIED A GIRL IN MY CLASS.



THINKING,  
WHAT  
I DID  
WASN'T  
RIGHT.

IT STILL  
BOTHERS  
ME NOW, AND  
I FEEL  
CRAPPY...

AND...  
BECAUSE  
OF ME, SHE  
DROPPED OUT  
OF SCHOOL.



BACK THEN,  
I DIDN'T  
REALLY MEAN  
TO BULLY  
HER  
...

I DON'T KNOW  
WHERE THE  
CHANGE OF HEART  
CAME FROM, BUT  
I'M SURE HER  
REMORSE IS REAL.

BUT...

BUT  
THINKING  
BACK ON  
IT NOW...

AS IF  
SHE WERE  
VOMITING  
OUT  
SOMETHING  
SHE'D BEEN  
BUILDING  
UP.

AFTER THAT,  
AYANE SEKI  
SPOKE OF HER  
COMPLETE  
REPENTANCE  
FOR BULLYING  
KASANE FUCHI...



I...

I HAVE  
SCARS THAT  
WILL NEVER  
DISAPPEAR,  
ALL MY LIFE.

FOR HER,  
HER UPSET  
IS SO MILD,  
JUST BEING  
WITH THE  
GUY SHE LIKES  
LETS HER  
FORGET IT.

I JUST  
COULDN'T  
FORGIVE  
HER.



IT NEVER  
SAVES THE  
ONE YOU  
WRONGED.



REPENTANCE IS  
JUST ABOUT  
YOUR OWN  
SALVATION...

NONE  
OF THOSE  
WORDS  
WILL REACH  
YOUR  
HEART.

JUST LIKE  
HOW NO  
MATTER HOW  
MUCH I  
REPENT  
TO YOU...



ISN'T  
THAT  
RIGHT,  
NEENA?

THE THINGS SHE DID TO ME  
THEN, AND THE ANGER I  
FELT THEN, CAME BUBBLING  
UP AGAIN FROM THE  
DEPTHS OF MY HEART.



AYANE SEKI...

NO, THAT  
WOULDN'T BE  
ENOUGH.

I WONDER...  
IF AZAMINO  
AND I WERE  
TO HAVE A  
RELATIONSHIP,  
WOULD THAT  
HURT HER?

USING THE  
KIND OF BRUTAL  
LANGUAGE  
THAT SHE USED  
TO SHOWER  
UPON ME?



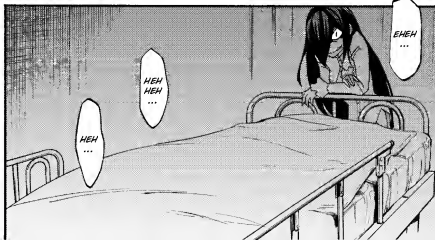
I KNOW, I'LL  
TAKE IT BEYOND  
BEING REJECTED  
BY SOMEONE SHE  
CARES FOR. HOW  
ABOUT I HAVE  
HIM DISPARAGE  
EVERYTHING  
ABOUT HER...

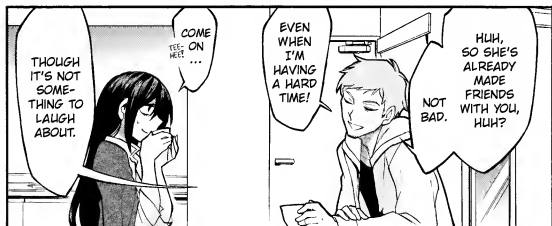
HEH  
...

HEH  
HEH  
...

EHEH  
...

I STILL DON'T  
KNOW IF IT'S  
POSSIBLE,  
BUT THIS WILL  
HELP TEACH  
ME WHAT THE  
LIPSTICK CAN  
DO, TOO.









SHE WAS BULLYING THIS GIRL, BUT ONCE THAT GIRL LEFT, SEKI BECAME THE NEXT TARGET.

SHE SAID SHE STILL REMEMBERED A BLINCH OF BULLYING STUFF FROM HIGH SCHOOL ...



SHE DROPPED OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL TO GET INTO THEATER RIGHT AWAY.



SEKI, HUH ...



SEEING YOU AGAIN HAS MADE ME FALL EVEN HARDER FOR YOU.

I HAVEN'T GIVEN UP.



HUH ?



SHE WAS WHINING ON AND ON TO ME ABOUT THAT STUFF.



BUT... THAT WON'T ERASE THE PAST! I STILL FEEL...



L  
SLURP

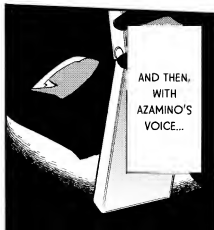
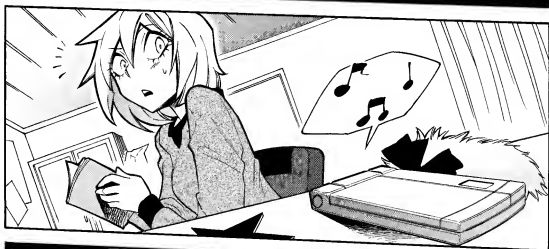
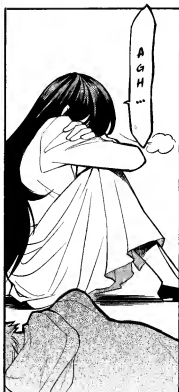
SO THAT'S WHY SHE'S SORRY FOR BULLYING ME.

NO WAY ...









I ALWAYS  
THOUGHT  
YOU WERE  
A PAIN IN  
THE ASS.

YOU'RE  
JUST PLAIN  
PHYSICALLY  
REPUSSIVE.

I CALLED  
AYANE SEKI  
JUST TO  
TEAR HER  
DOWN...

I TRAMPLED,  
TRASHED,  
AND DIS-  
PARAGED  
EVERYTHING  
ABOUT HER.

AZA-  
MINO-  
SA...

ARE YOU  
CRYING?  
UGH...

I'M SICK  
OF HEARING  
YOUR WHINING  
AND SEEING  
YOUR FACE,  
SO COULD  
YOU GET THE  
FUCK OUT OF  
MY LIFE?

I...

KA-  
SANE!

HABUTA-  
SAN? I'M  
HEADED  
TO THE  
HOSPITAL  
RIGHT  
NOW.

HUH?

YOU  
KISSED  
SOMEONE  
ELSE AND  
SWITCHED  
YOUR  
FACES?!

BUT  
NEENA'S  
GOT HER  
FACE  
BACK.

YOU  
STILL  
HAVE  
SOME  
TIME  
LEFT,



YEAH.

I KISSED  
THEM WITH  
NEENA'S  
FACE ON, BUT  
THE PERSON  
DIDN'T BECOME  
NEENA, THEY  
GOT MY  
FACE.

I SEE.  
SO THIS  
MEANS  
WHEN  
YOU KISS  
SOME-  
ONE NEW,

IT  
CANCELS  
OUT YOUR  
PREVIOUS  
FACE  
SWAP.



URK  
"h"  
"

ANYWAY,  
I TOLD  
YOU NOT  
TO GET  
INTO  
DANGEROUS  
BUSINESS  
WITHOUT  
ASKING  
ME!

WHO  
DID  
YOU  
SWAP  
FACES  
WITH  
?!

THE  
SOUND  
OPERATOR  
FROM  
THE  
SEAGULL.

EVEN  
I DON'T  
KNOW  
EVERY-  
THING.  
SHE  
WAS A  
VERY  
CAUTIOUS  
WOMAN.

FOR  
SOME-  
ONE WHO  
HELPED  
OUT MY  
MOTHER,  
IT SOUNDS  
LIKE  
THERE'S  
A LOT  
YOU DON'T  
KNOW.

...



WHAT  
?!

NO  
WAY... KEI  
AZAMINO?  
DID HE DO  
ANYTHING  
TO YOU?

YOU  
KNOW  
?

HE'S  
GREAT  
AT HIS  
JOB  
...

BUT  
YOU HEAR  
NOTHING  
BUT BAD  
RUMORS  
ABOUT HIS  
RELATION-  
SHIPS  
WITH  
WOMEN.

THEY  
SAY HE'S  
MADE  
MOVES  
ON COUNT-  
LESS  
WOMEN,  
AND  
FUCKED  
THEM  
OVER.

...



BUT IT MAY IN  
FACT BE BETTER  
FOR HER, TO  
CUT OFF HER  
RELATIONSHIP  
WITH THAT  
DOUCHEBAG.

WHAT I DID  
WILL CERTAINLY  
HAVE HURT  
AYANE SEKI...

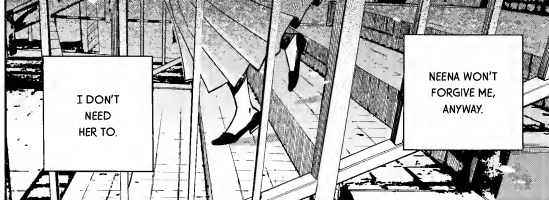
BUT  
THAT'S...

WHEN I REALIZED  
THAT, I WASN'T  
FRUSTRATED; I  
WAS RELIEVED.

BECAUSE  
I WANT  
NEENA TO  
FORGIVE ME...  
AREN'T I?

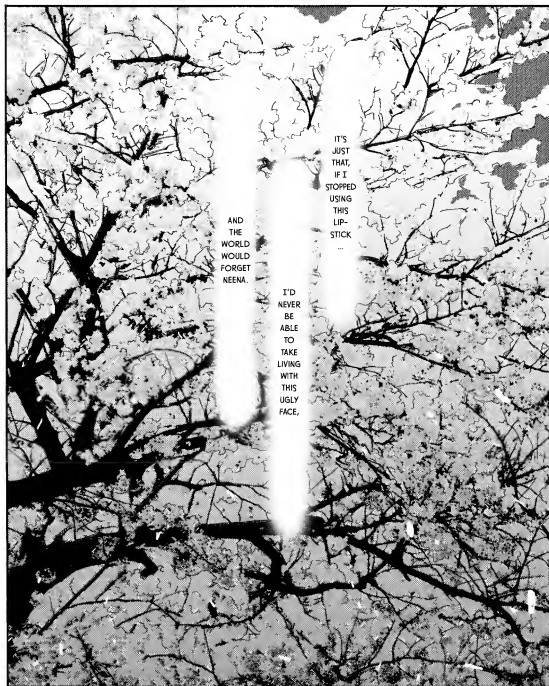
I'M JUST  
TRYING TO  
FORGIVE  
AYANE SEKI  
...

STUPID!



I DON'T  
NEED  
HER TO.

NEENA WON'T  
FORGIVE ME,  
ANYWAY.



AND  
THE  
WORLD  
WOULD  
FORGET  
NEENA.

IT'S  
JUST  
THAT,  
IF I  
STOPPED  
USING  
THIS  
LIP-  
STICK  
...

I'D  
NEVER  
BE  
ABLE  
TO  
TAKE  
LIVING  
WITH  
THIS  
UGLY  
FACE,

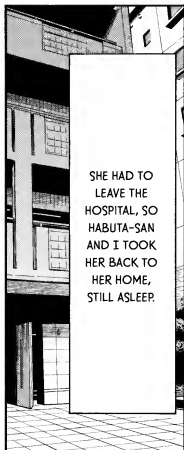
**KASANE**

LATER...



Chapter Twenty-Two: Castle of Thorns





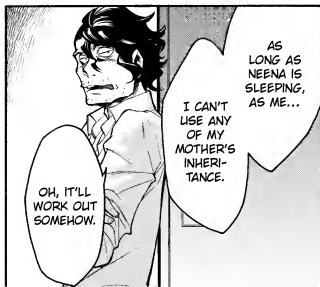
SHE HAD TO  
LEAVE THE  
HOSPITAL, SO  
HABUTA-SAN  
AND I TOOK  
HER BACK TO  
HER HOME,  
STILL ASLEEP.

AT THAT  
STAGE, THE  
DOCTOR  
FINALLY  
PRONOUNCED  
HER IN A  
COMATOSE  
STATE.



FINAN-  
CIALLY  
SPEAK-  
ING.

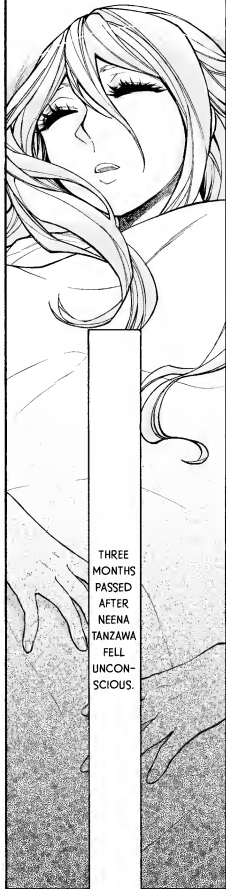
IS ALL  
OF THIS...  
REALLY  
GOING TO  
WORK  
OUT?



OH, IT'LL  
WORK OUT  
SOMEHOW.

I CAN'T  
USE ANY  
OF MY  
MOTHER'S  
INHERI-  
TANCE.

AS  
LONG AS  
NEENA IS  
SLEEPING,  
AS ME...



THREE  
MONTHS  
PASSED  
AFTER  
NEENA  
TANZAWA  
FELL  
UNCON-  
SCIOUS.



YOU GOT  
AN OFFER  
FOR SALOMÉ,  
DIDN'T YOU?



WHO  
REQUESTS  
THE HEAD OF  
A MAN WHO  
WAS MOVED  
BY HER  
DANCING AS  
A REWARD.

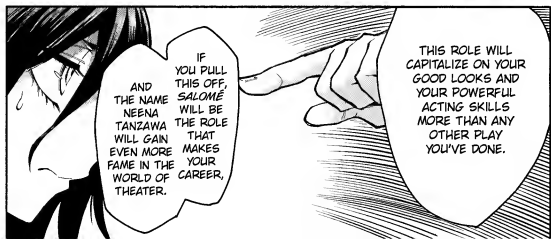
THE STORY  
OF THE  
BEAUTIFUL  
AND  
TERRIFYING  
VIRGIN  
PRINCESS  
OF JUDÆA  
...

OSCAR  
WILDE'S  
SALOMÉ  
...



YES.

THOUGH  
THAT'S  
STILL  
DOWN  
THE  
ROAD.



IF  
YOU PULL  
THIS OFF,  
SALOMÉ  
WILL BE  
THE ROLE  
THAT  
MAKES  
YOUR  
CAREER,  
THEATER.  
AND  
THE NAME  
NEENA  
TANZAWA  
WILL GAIN  
EVEN MORE  
FAME IN THE  
WORLD OF  
THEATER.

THIS ROLE WILL  
CAPITALIZE ON YOUR  
GOOD LOOKS AND  
YOUR POWERFUL  
ACTING SKILLS  
MORE THAN ANY  
OTHER PLAY  
YOU'VE DONE.





AS LONG  
AS I HAVE  
NEENA'S  
FACE IN  
HAND...



THIS MEANS  
THAT AS LONG  
AS YOU HAVE  
NEENA'S FACE  
IN HAND, YOU'LL  
MOVE UP IN  
THE WORLD OF  
ACTING AT A  
STEADY PACE.

THEN THE  
MONEY WILL  
COME AS A  
MATTER OF  
COURSE.



BECAUSE  
WE CAN KEEP  
YOUR SECRET  
LOCKED UP.



AND FOR  
THAT, IT'S MORE  
CONVENIENT TO HAVE  
NEENA HERE THAN  
AT THE HOSPITAL.



WHAT DO  
WE DO WHEN  
SOMEONE  
APPEARS TO  
PUSH ASIDE  
THOSE THORNS  
AND COME  
VISIT THE  
PRINCESS?

BUT,  
HABUTA-  
SAN...

WE'RE  
THE EVIL  
SORCERERS  
HIDING  
SLEEPING  
BEAUTY IN  
THE CASTLE  
OF THORNS,  
SO TO  
SPEAK.

YES  
...



NEENA'S  
PARENTS ARE  
COMING HERE  
TO VISIT  
TOMORROW.

WHAT  
?



YEAH  
...

I FOUND  
SOME-  
THING  
I THINK  
CAN HELP  
ME WITH  
THAT.

THEN I  
GUESS THIS  
TIME, YOU'VE  
GOT NO CHOICE  
BUT TO DO  
YOUR BEST TO  
IMITATE NEENA  
TANZAWA.

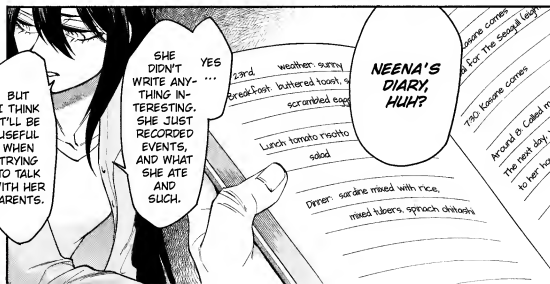
I'VE  
REFUSED  
THEM  
AGAIN AND  
AGAIN!  
REFUSING  
THEM ANY  
MORE...

WOULD  
SEEM  
LINNAT-  
URAL.

YOU  
COULDN'T  
TURN  
THEM  
DOWN?!



WHAT'S  
THAT?



BUT  
I THINK  
IT'LL BE  
USEFUL  
WHEN  
TRYING  
TO TALK  
WITH HER  
PARENTS.

SHE  
DIDN'T  
WRITE ANY-  
THING IN-  
TERESTING.  
SHE JUST  
RECORDED  
EVENTS,  
AND WHAT  
SHE ATE  
AND SUCH.

YES  
...

NEENA'S  
DIARY,  
HUH?

23rd weather: sunny  
breakfast: buttered toast, s  
scrambled eggs  
Lunch tomato risotto  
salad

Dinner: sardine mixed with rice,  
mixed tubers, spinach chutney

24th Kazane comes  
for The Seagull League  
25th Kazane comes  
Around 8:00 Called me  
The next day  
to her house

IS ACTING THAT  
TRANSCENDS  
EVEN THE BOND  
BETWEEN PARENT  
AND CHILD...  
EVEN POSSIBLE  
FOR ME?

BUT CAN  
I DECEIVE  
THEM?



SORRY  
TO BOTHER  
YOU  
WHEN  
YOU'RE  
SO  
BUSY!

NEE-  
NA!

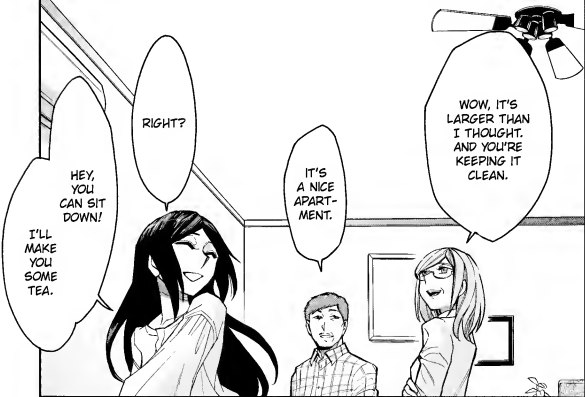
IT'S  
OKAY!  
COME  
ON IN!



DADDY!  
MOMMY!

IT'S  
BEEN SO  
LONG!





I'LL  
MAKE  
YOU  
SOME  
TEA.

HEY,  
YOU  
CAN SIT  
DOWN!

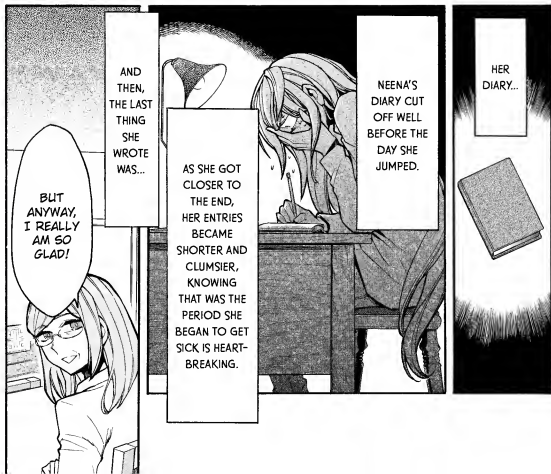
RIGHT?

IT'S  
A NICE  
APART-  
MENT.

WOW, IT'S  
LARGER THAN  
I THOUGHT.  
AND YOU'RE  
KEEPING IT  
CLEAN.

I KNOW  
ENOUGH ABOUT  
HER, FROM THE  
RECORDS IN  
HER DIARY.

IT'LL  
BE  
O.KAY.



AND  
THEN,  
THE LAST  
THING  
SHE  
WROTE  
WAS...

BUT  
ANYWAY,  
I REALLY  
AM SO  
GLAD!

AS SHE GOT  
CLOSER TO  
THE END,  
HER ENTRIES  
BECAME  
SHORTER AND  
CLUMSIER,  
KNOWING  
THAT WAS THE  
PERIOD SHE  
BEGAN TO GET  
SICK IS HEART-  
BREAKING.

NEENA'S  
DIARY CUT  
OFF WELL  
BEFORE THE  
DAY SHE  
JUMPED.

HER  
DIARY...

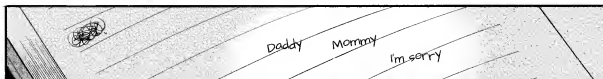




WE'RE  
SO PROUD  
OF YOU,  
NEENA.

THAT'S  
RIGHT.  
AS YOUR  
PARENTS,  
THAT'S THE  
GREATEST  
GIFT WE  
COULD  
EVER  
RECEIVE  
FROM  
YOU.

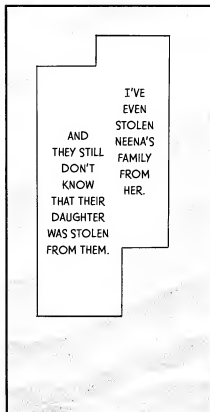
WE'RE  
SO HAPPY  
JUST TO  
HAVE YOU  
SMILE AND  
WELCOME US,  
AFTER OVER-  
COMING YOUR  
DIFFICULT  
ILLNESS.



Daddy

Mommy

I'm sorry



AND  
THEY STILL  
DON'T  
KNOW  
THAT THEIR  
DAUGHTER  
WAS STOLEN  
FROM THEM.

I'VE  
EVEN  
STOLEN  
NEENA'S  
FAMILY  
FROM  
HER.



LET  
ME USE  
YOUR  
KITCH-  
EN.  
I'LL  
COOK  
FOR  
YOU TO-  
NIGHT.



KIND,  
AND  
WARM.



BUT THESE  
PEOPLE...

ARE SO  
GOOD...

BUT THAT'S  
JUST WHY I  
HAVE TO KEEP  
ON FOOLING  
THEM.



IS THIS WHAT  
A NORMAL  
FAMILY IS LIKE?  
IT FEELS LIKE  
SOMETHING  
PRECIOUS,  
SOMETHING  
I CAN NEVER  
HAVE...



THIS IS  
SORT OF  
EMBAR-  
RASSING.

LOOK,  
THERE  
ARE  
PHOTOS  
FROM THE  
SEAGULL.  
NICE,  
AREN'T  
THEY?



YOU DON'T  
HAVE TO  
HELP OUT.  
YOU JUST  
CHAT WITH  
YOUR  
FATHER.

TH-  
THANKS.

Teer-  
hee!  
IT'S  
FINE!







ONE  
MORE  
TIME...  
AND  
REPRO-  
DUCE  
IT ALL  
PRE-  
CISELY.

THE  
WAY  
SHE  
TALKS  
...

HABITS  
...

NEENA'S  
GES-  
TURES  
...

I WILL  
REMEM-  
BER...

I HAVE  
TO KEEP  
IT TO-  
GETHER.



I CAN'T  
HURT HER  
LIKE THAT!  
I CAN'T  
MAKE HER  
FEEL EVEN  
THE SLIGHT-  
EST BIT  
WORRIED  
...

IF THIS KIND  
MOTHER  
FINDS OUT  
THE TRUTH  
BEYOND  
THAT DOOR  
...

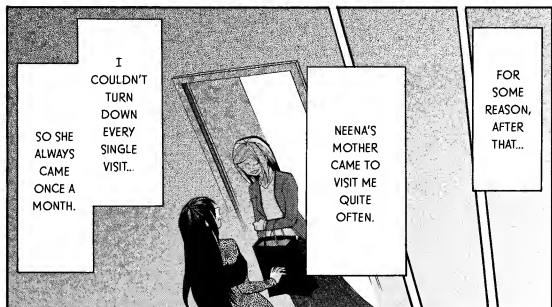
I  
CAN'T  
LET  
THEM  
FIND  
OUT  
...

I'LL  
RECREATE  
A NEENA  
TANZAWA  
MOST LIKE  
NEENA  
TANZAWA!









SO SHE  
ALWAYS  
CAME  
ONCE A  
MONTH.

I  
COULDN'T  
TURN  
DOWN  
EVERY  
SINGLE  
VISIT...

NEENA'S  
MOTHER  
CAME TO  
VISIT ME  
QUITE  
OFTEN.

FOR  
SOME  
REASON,  
AFTER  
THAT...

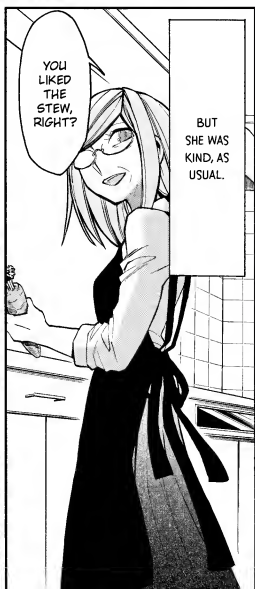


IF MY  
MOTHER  
HAD BEEN  
ALIVE...  
WOULD  
SHE BE  
STANDING  
IN THE  
KITCHEN,  
JUST  
LIKE  
THAT?



YEAH!  
I LOVE  
EVERY-  
THING  
YOU  
MAKE!

I FOUND  
MYSELF  
LEANING  
ON HER  
KINDNESS.



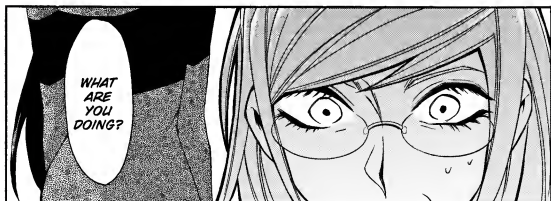
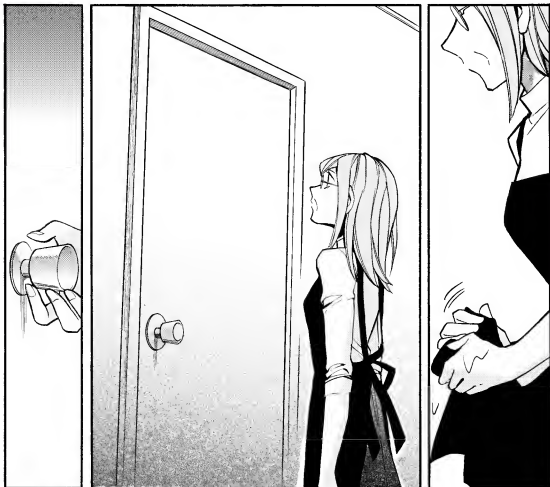
YOU  
LIKED  
THE  
STEW,  
RIGHT?

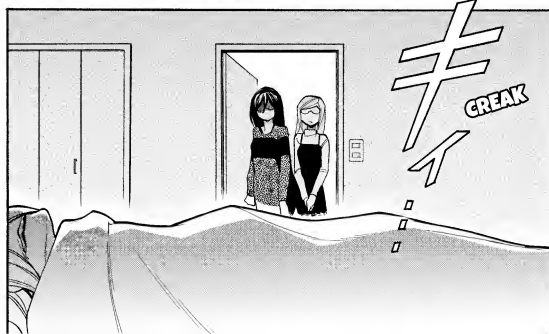
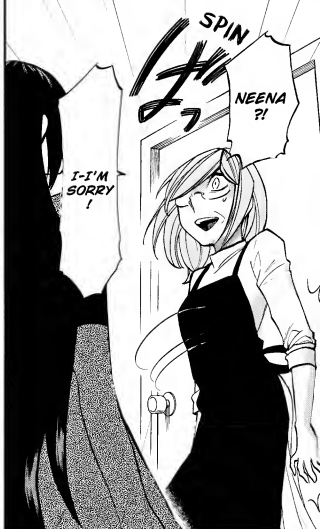
BUT  
SHE WAS  
KIND, AS  
USUAL.

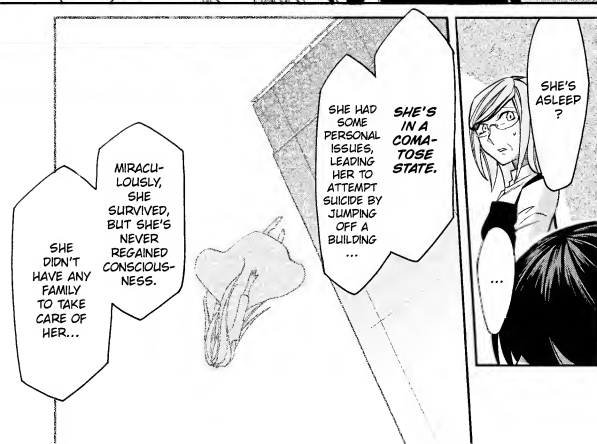
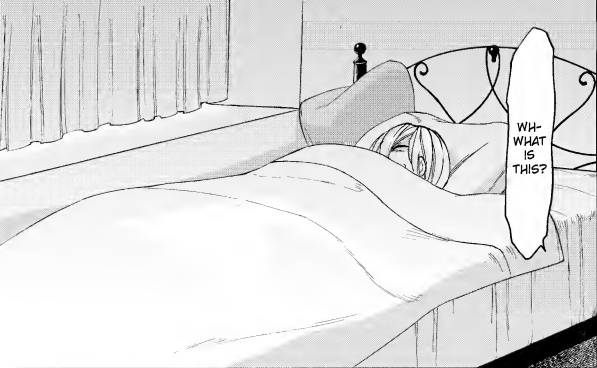


OH...  
I HAVE  
TO TAKE  
THIS  
CALL.

OKAY.













I DON'T  
THINK MOST  
PEOPLE  
WOULD  
REALLY  
CONSIDER

...  
THE IDEA  
THAT THEIR  
DAUGHTER  
HAS BEEN  
REPLACED  
BY AN IM-  
POSTOR.

THAT'S  
TRUE,  
BUT...



I THINK  
THAT  
MIGHT  
BE  
WHY...

ONCE, WHEN  
IT LOOKED  
LIKE SHE  
WAS ABOUT  
TO OPEN  
THE DOOR  
TO NEENA'S  
ROOM, I  
YELLED AT  
HER WITHOUT  
THINKING.



HMM...



MIGHT  
ACTUALLY  
FEEL MORE  
UNCANNY THAN  
THEM BEEN  
ENTIRELY,  
BLATANTLY  
DIFFERENT.

...  
WELL,  
WHEN  
YOU KNOW  
SOMEONE  
REALLY WELL,  
SEEING THEM  
ACT JUST  
SLIGHTLY  
DIFFERENTLY  
...





Chapter Twenty-Three: Things to be Preserved, Things to be Destroyed



BUT..

"DO NOT  
STAY HERE,  
PRINCESS.  
I PRAY  
YOU DO  
NOT STAY  
HERE."

"HOW  
WASTED  
HE IS! HE  
IS LIKE A  
THIN IVORY  
STATUE. HE  
IS LIKE AN  
IMAGE OF  
SILVER. I AM  
SURE HE IS  
CHASTE  
AS THE  
MOON IS.  
HE IS LIKE  
A MOON-  
BEAM,  
LIKE A  
SHAFT OF  
SILVER.  
  
I  
WOULD  
LOOK  
CLOSER  
AT HIM.  
I MUST  
LOOK  
AT HIM  
CLOSER."



THE  
REHEAR-  
SALS  
FOR  
SALOME  
BEGAN.



"WHO  
IS THIS  
WOMAN  
WHO IS  
LOOKING  
AT ME?"

"PRINCESS!  
PRINCESS!"

NOBU-  
HIKO  
UNO  
IS  
PLAY-  
ING  
THE  
ROLE  
OF THE  
PROPH-  
ET  
JOKA-  
NAAN.

I'D  
EXPECT  
NOTH-  
ING  
HE  
TAKES  
LESS  
SUCH  
OF  
A  
FANTAS-  
TICAL  
ROLE  
AS THE  
PROPH-  
ET, AND  
BEAUTI-  
FULLY  
MAKES  
IT  
REAL.

WHERE-  
FORE  
DOTH  
SHE  
LOOK AT  
ME WITH  
HER  
GOLDEN  
EYES,  
UNDER  
HER  
GILDED  
EYELIDS?"

"I  
WILL  
NOT  
HAVE  
HER  
LOOK  
AT  
ME.

STOP,  
STOP!

"I AM  
SALOMÉ,  
DAUGHTER  
OF HERODIAS,  
PRINCESS OF  
JUDÆA..."



WHEN I  
HEARD ABOUT  
YOU, I LOOKED  
FORWARD TO  
SEEING WHAT  
YOUR ACTING  
WAS LIKE, BUT  
YOU'VE BEEN  
AN UTTER  
LETDOWN!

YOU THINK  
YOU CAN PLAY  
SALOMÉ WITH  
THAT KIND OF  
ACTING?



THEN  
ONE  
MORE  
TIME...

I-I'M  
SORRY.

SINCE REHEARSALS  
STARTED, NOBUHIKO  
UNO HAS COMPLAINED  
ABOUT ME  
NUMEROUS TIMES.



IT'S  
BECAUSE  
YOU CODDLE  
HER THAT  
SHE DOESN'T  
GET IT.

NEENA  
TAN-  
ZAWA  
...



IT'S  
GOOD  
TO BE  
PAS-  
SIONATE  
ABOUT  
THIS  
PLAY,  
UNO-  
KUN,  
BUT  
HER  
ACTING  
ISN'T  
THAT  
BAD.

HEY,  
HEY,  
HOLD  
ON.

MAKI-  
TA-  
SAN  
...

And that  
sort of  
thing is my  
job, as the  
director.

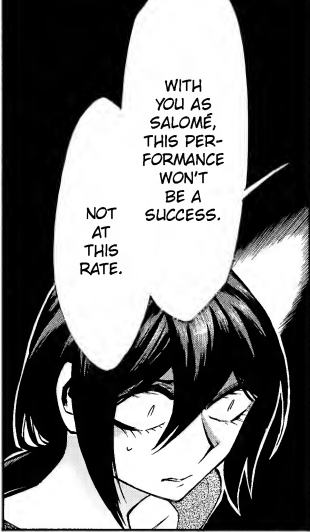




SOME-  
ONE  
ALWAYS  
COMES  
IN TO  
SAVE  
YOU,  
AM I  
RIGHT?  
LIKE  
JUST  
NOW.

PEOPLE  
HAVE  
ALWAYS  
BEEN  
KIND TO  
YOU...

BECAUSE  
OF YOUR  
GOOD  
LOOKS.



WITH  
YOU AS  
SALOMÉ,  
THIS PER-  
FORMANCE  
WON'T  
BE A  
SUCCESS.

NOT  
AT  
THIS  
RATE.



IF THAT'S  
ALL YOU'VE  
GOT, YOU'LL  
END UP  
JUST A  
DECORA-  
TION,

NEENA  
TANZAWA!

BUT  
FOR THE  
ROLE OF  
SALOMÉ,  
BEAUTY  
IS  
JUST A  
MATTER  
OF  
COURSE.



A  
MATTER  
OF  
COURSE  
...

BEAUTY  
IS...



I BECOME  
TIMID AND  
COWARDLY,  
JUST LIKE  
THE REAL  
KASANE.

STIRS  
UP THE  
INFERI-  
ORITY  
COM-  
PLEX  
OF MY  
UGLY  
SELF.



STIRS  
UP THE  
INFERI-  
ORITY  
COM-  
PLEX  
OF MY  
UGLY  
SELF.

THE  
WAY  
YOU  
LOOK  
DOWN  
ON  
ME



BUT  
HE'S  
RIGHT.  
LATELY,  
SOMETIMES  
I JUST  
HAVEN'T  
BEEN  
ABLE TO  
CONCEN-  
TRATE.

BUT  
THAT'S  
YOUR  
FAULT,  
TOO,  
JOKANAAN!



BUT  
HE'S  
RIGHT.  
LATELY,  
SOMETIMES  
I JUST  
HAVEN'T  
BEEN  
ABLE TO  
CONCEN-  
TRATE.

BUT  
THAT'S  
YOUR  
FAULT,  
TOO,  
JOKANAAN!

I'VE  
RECEIVED  
A FAIR  
AMOUNT  
OF PRAISE  
NOT JUST  
FOR MY  
LOOKS, BUT  
FOR MY  
ACTING,  
TOO.

DESPITE HIS REMARKS

AND...

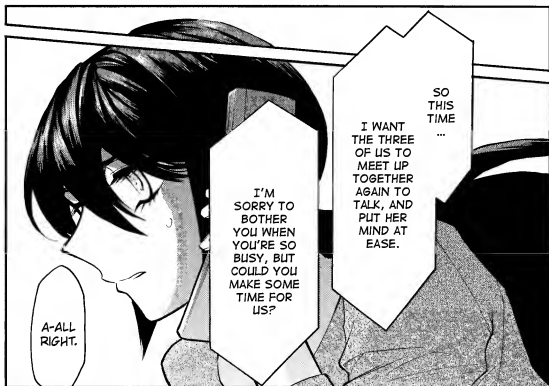
WHAT IS IT, DADDY?

THAT'S NOT  
THE ONLY  
REASON  
I CAN'T  
CONCENTRATE.

HELLO ?

11 BEEP







I SEE.

"IF SHE  
GETS TOO  
PERSISTENT  
WITH HER  
SUSPICIONS,  
CALL ME."

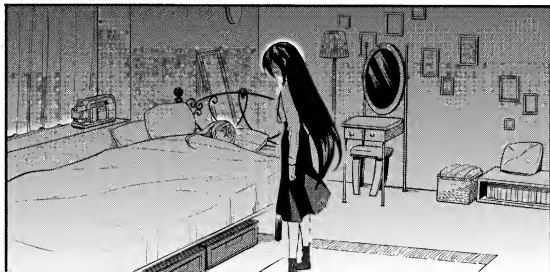


SO THAT  
MEANS WE  
HAVE TO  
SETTLE THIS,  
HUH?

THERE'S THE  
CHANCE THAT  
THE NEXT TIME  
YOU ALL GET  
TOGETHER,  
NEENA'S MOTHER  
WILL HIT YOU WITH  
A BARRAGE OF  
QUESTIONS TO  
MAKE SURE THAT  
YOU'RE REALLY  
NEENA.





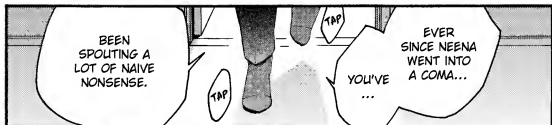






**AND  
MAKE  
ME STOP  
NOW...  
MAKE  
ME STOP  
DOING ALL  
THESE  
HORRIBLE  
THINGS!**

**WAKE  
UP AL-  
READY!**





LOOK  
IN THE  
MIRROR!

SHOVE



...!



I-I  
DON'T  
WANT  
TO.

THE SCARIER  
LOOKING  
AT MY OWN  
FACE GETS.

THE MORE  
TIME I  
SPEND WITH  
NEENA'S  
FACE ON...

I HAVEN'T  
LOOKED  
AT MY REAL  
FACE FOR  
A WHILE.

JUST  
LOOK.

NO...



TH-  
THAT  
HURTS  
!

LET  
ME  
GO!

WHAT  
ARE  
YOU  
DOING  
?!

DRAW

**LOOK!**



THAT'S RIGHT. THIS FACE STOLE EVERYTHING FROM YOU.

THAT'S WHY YOU COULD NEVER HAVE FRIENDS, FAMILY, OR LOVE!

AM I WRONG?

I WAS TOO USED TO BEING NEENA. WHAT I SAW THERE WAS...

A MONSTER ...

A-

IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I LAST LOOKED AT MY FACE, LOOKING AT IT FELT ALMOST LIKE GAZING AT THE FACE OF A STRANGER.



YES...  
IT'S ALL  
BECAUSE  
OF THIS  
FACE.

*YOU'RE  
NOT.*



EVERY-  
THING  
...



EVERY-  
THING!



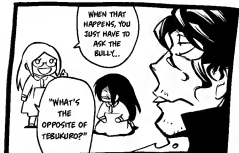




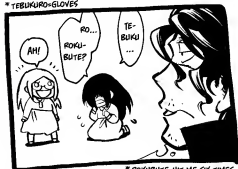


**KASANE**

# GIRLS 3



\* TEBUKURO=GLOVES



\* ROKUBUTE=HIT ME SIX TIMES



Chapter Twenty-Four: Cold-blooded



"ART THOU  
NOT AFRAID,  
DAUGHTER OF  
HERODIAS? DID I  
NOT TELL THEE  
THAT I HAD  
HEARD IN THE  
PALACE..."

"SUFFER  
ME TO KISS  
THY MOUTH,  
JOKANAAN."

THE  
BEATINGS OF  
THE WINGS  
OF THE ANGEL  
OF DEATH, AND  
HATH HE NOT  
COME, THE  
ANGEL OF  
DEATH?"

"SUFFER  
ME TO  
KISS THY  
MOUTH!"

GREAT. IT  
LOOKS LIKE  
SHE'S GOT  
A GRASP ON  
THE ROLE.

PRINCESS!  
DO NOT  
SPEAK  
THESE  
THINGS!"



"I WILL  
NOT  
LOOK AT  
THEE..."



THOU ART  
ACCURSED."

"THOU  
ART AC-  
CURSED,

SALOMÉ,

NOBU-  
HIKO  
UNO...



YOUR SCORN  
AND MY OWN  
SENSE OF  
INFERIORITY!

I CAN'T LET  
MYSELF TO  
GIVE INTO...



I WILL  
KISS THY  
MOUTH."

"I WILL  
KISS THY  
MOUTH,

JOKANAAN;



YOU'VE STARTED  
TO DO SOME DECENT  
ACTING, AFTER A  
LITTLE CHEWING OUT.



YOU  
THINK  
IT'S  
BECAUSE  
YOU  
RAGGED  
ON ME?

YOU'RE  
JUST LIKE  
SALOMÉ,  
EVER MORE  
PERSISTENT  
THE MORE  
JOKANAAN  
REJECTS  
HER.

LINO-  
KUN  
...





IT'S NOT  
BECAUSE  
OF YOU.

DON'T  
GET THE  
WRONG  
IDEA.



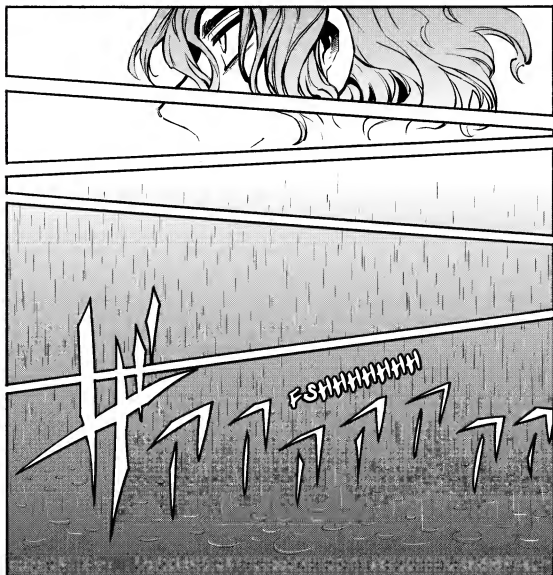
THIS IS  
THE FIRST  
TIME I'VE  
EVER SEEN  
HER ANGRY  
LIKE THAT.



FROM  
THE  
MOMENT  
I SAW  
HER.

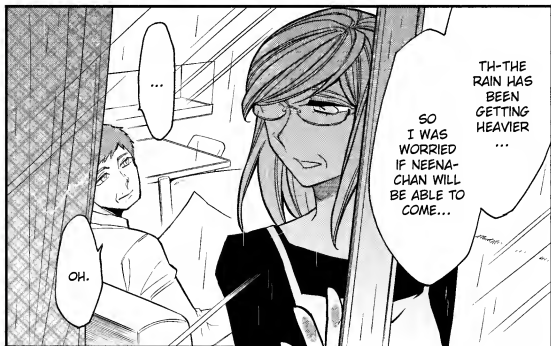
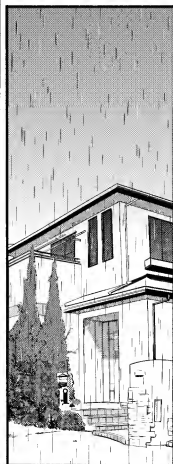


I ALWAYS  
THOUGHT  
SHE WAS  
THAT SORT OF  
CHARACTER  
...





WHAT'S  
WRONG?  
YOU'VE  
DONE  
NOTHING  
BUT LOOK  
OUTSIDE.



OH.

...

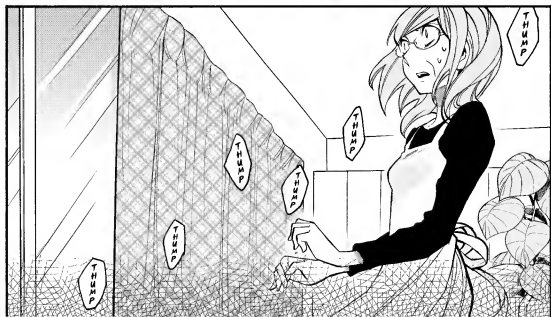
TH-THE  
RAIN HAS  
BEEN  
GETTING  
HEAVIER  
...  
SO  
I WAS  
WORRIED  
IF NEENA-  
CHAN WILL  
BE ABLE TO  
COME...



NO.

I'M  
SCARED.

SCARED  
OF MY DAUGH-  
TER,  
WHO IS  
COMING  
TO VISIT.



THUMP

THUMP

THUMP

THUMP

THUMP

THUMP



MOMMY!



HAS SHE  
ALWAYS  
SPOKEN  
IN THAT  
TONE  
OF  
VOICE?

WEL-  
COME  
HOME,  
NEE-  
NA!

I'M  
BACK,  
DADDY!



OH!

DING  
DONG

HAS SHE...  
ALWAYS HAD  
THAT LOOK  
IN HER EYES?



HAS SHE  
ALWAYS  
SMILED  
LIKE THAT?

I'M  
HOME!



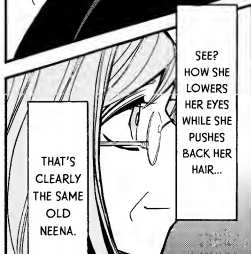
WHAT AM  
I THINK?

NO...



NO,  
I'M  
OKAY!

IT'S  
NOT FAR  
FROM  
THE  
STATION.



THAT'S  
CLEARLY  
THE SAME  
OLD  
NEENA.

SEE?  
HOW SHE  
LOWERS  
HER EYES  
WHILE SHE  
PUSHES  
BACK HER  
HAIR...

TO  
THINK  
THAT A  
STRANGER  
MIGHT BE  
IMPER-  
SONATING  
MY  
DAUGHTER  
...



WELCOME  
HOME,  
NEENA.

YOU  
MUST  
HAVE HAD  
A HARD  
TIME, WITH  
ALL THAT  
RAIN.

BUT...



WHAT  
IF...

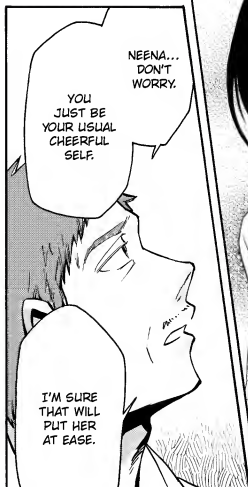
THERE'S  
A COM-  
PLETELY  
DIFFERENT  
PERSON...

DOING  
A TERRI-  
FYINGLY  
ELABO-  
RATE  
IMPRES-  
SION OF  
HER?









NEENA...  
DON'T  
WORRY.

YOU  
JUST BE  
YOUR USUAL  
CHEERFUL  
SELF.

I'M SURE  
THAT WILL  
PUT HER  
AT EASE.



I  
WONDER  
WHAT'S  
GOING  
ON WITH  
HER?



LISTEN.

AND  
MOVING  
FORWARD,  
THAT'D  
MAKE USING  
NEENA'S  
FACE  
DIFFICULT.

IF  
YOU CAN'T  
MANAGE  
TO TRICK  
HIM, MY  
SCENARIO  
WON'T  
WORK...

JUST  
MAKE  
SURE THAT  
THE DAD  
DOESN'T  
SUSPECT  
YOU.



THAT  
IS MY  
LIFE.

DADDY  
...



MY  
LIFE AS  
AN  
ACTRESS  
...

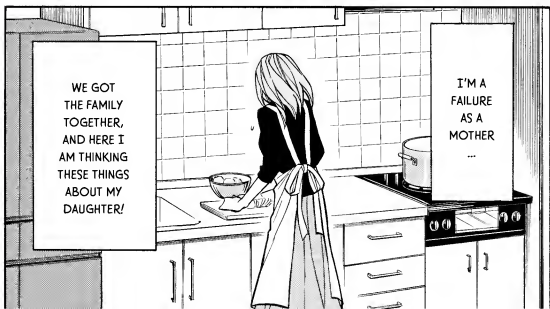


YOUR  
LIFE  
AS AN  
ACTRESS  
IS RIDING  
ON THIS.



YEAH,  
  
OF  
COURSE.

ABOUT  
WHAT I  
TOLD YOU  
BEFORE  
...  
  
I'M SURE  
THAT'S OUT  
OF THE  
QUESTION,  
SO DON'T  
WORRY  
ABOUT IT,  
OKAY?





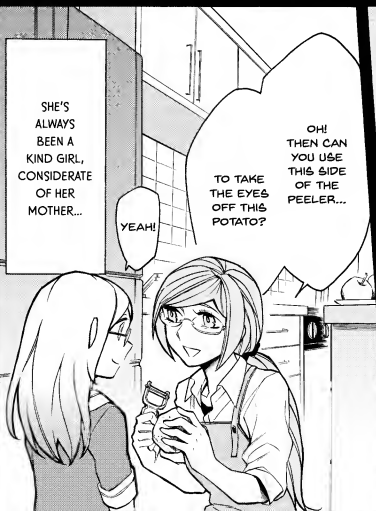


NOW  
THAT I  
THINK  
OF IT  
...



THAT'LL  
BE A  
BIG  
HELP.

ALL RIGHT,  
THEN I'LL  
PEEL THE  
POTATOES.

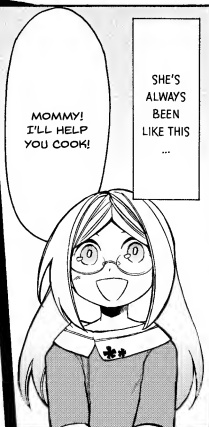


SHE'S  
ALWAYS  
BEEN A  
KIND GIRL,  
CONSIDERATE  
OF HER  
MOTHER...

YEAH!

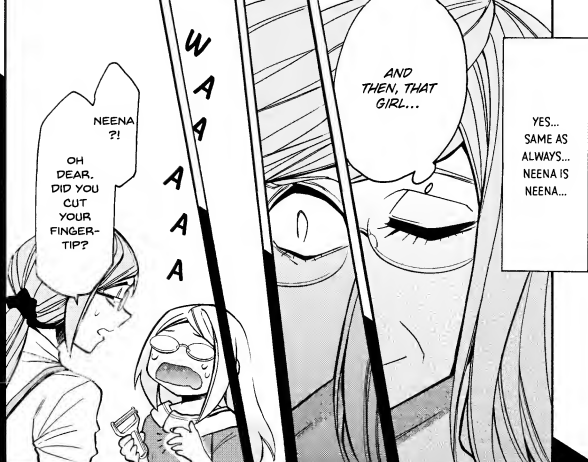
TO TAKE  
THE EYES  
OFF THIS  
POTATO?

OH!  
THEN CAN  
YOU USE  
THIS SIDE  
OF THE  
PEELER...



MOMMY!  
I'LL HELP  
YOU COOK!

SHE'S  
ALWAYS  
BEEN  
LIKE THIS  
...



NEENA  
?!

OH  
DEAR,  
DID YOU  
CUT  
YOUR  
FINGER-  
TIP?

AND  
THEN, THAT  
GIRL...

YES...  
SAME AS  
ALWAYS...  
NEENA IS  
NEENA...



I DON'T  
WANNA  
DO THIS  
ANY-  
MORE!

OWIE!

I SAID  
SHE COULD  
JUST TAKE  
OFF THE  
EYES, SINCE  
THESE ARE  
TRICKY...  
BUT SHE  
TRIED TO  
PEEL THE  
SKIN OFF,  
TOO.

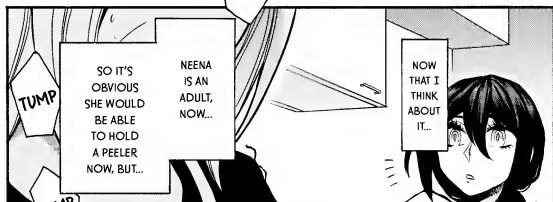


THIS  
WAS  
WHEN  
...





I STOP  
BEING ABLE  
TO THINK  
CALMLY.



SO IT'S  
OBVIOUS  
SHE WOULD  
BE ABLE  
TO HOLD  
A PEELER  
NOW, BUT...

NEENA  
IS AN  
ADULT,  
NOW...

NOW  
THAT I  
THINK  
ABOUT  
IT...









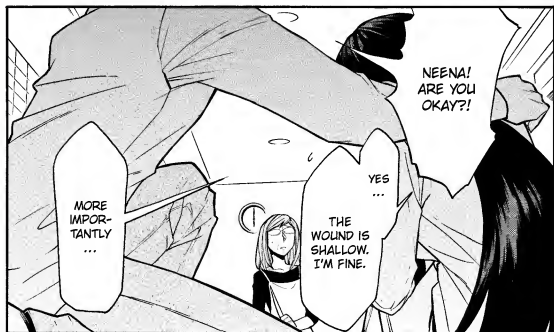
**WHAT  
ARE YOU  
DOING?!**

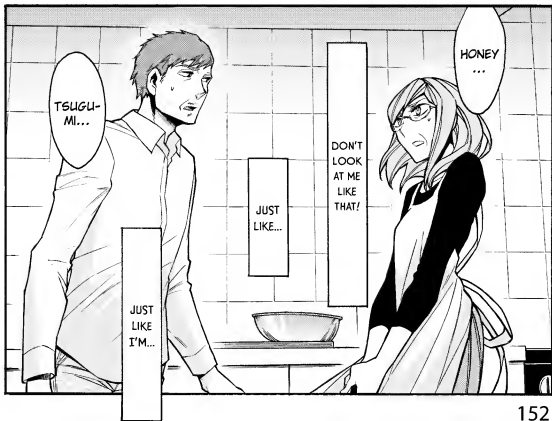


**WHO  
THE  
HELL  
ARE  
YOU?!**

**MOM-  
MY...**

**YOU'RE  
NOT  
NEENA!**







OUR  
DAUGHTER  
IS...

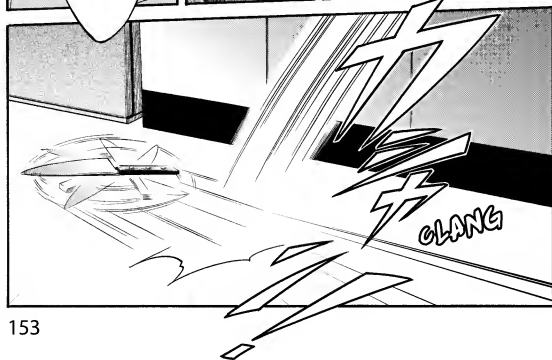


WHAT  
?

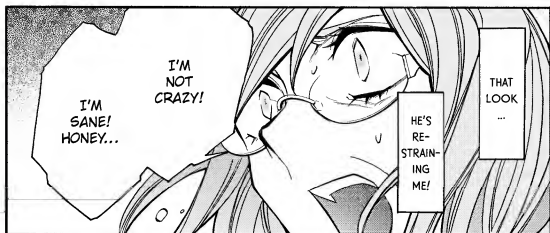
WHY  
CAN'T  
YOU  
TELL?



WHAT  
ON EARTH  
IS GOING  
ON WITH  
YOU?











BELIEVE  
THAT  
I AM  
NEENA  
TAN-  
ZAWA.

THIS IS  
YOUR  
FINAL  
CHOICE.

RIGHT?

I'M  
YOUR  
DAUGHTER,  
NEENA.

LOOK,

TSU-  
GUMI  
TAN-  
ZAWA.



SAY  
IT TO  
ME...

IF  
YOU  
DON'T  
...

MOMMY,  
PLEASE  
...



I'VE  
ALWAYS  
BEEN QUIET  
AND FRAIL,  
EVER SINCE I  
WAS LITTLE...  
AND THEN I  
CONTRACTED  
SLEEPING  
BEAUTY  
SYNDROME,  
TOO...

I FEEL  
THAT WE  
HAVE A  
CLOSER  
BOND THAN  
MOST  
MOTHERS  
AND  
DAUGHTERS.

YOU  
CAN  
TELL  
THAT,  
TOO,  
RIGHT?

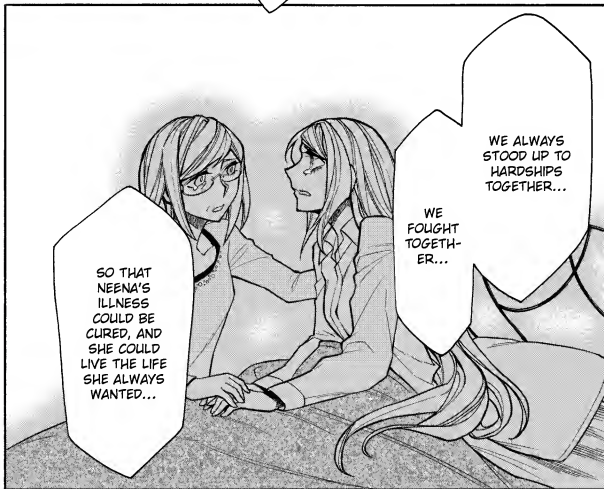
BUT  
YOU WERE  
ALWAYS  
WITH ME,  
EVERY  
MINUTE.



THAT'S  
RIGHT.

YES

...



SO THAT  
NEENA'S  
ILLNESS  
COULD BE  
CURED, AND  
SHE COULD  
LIVE THE LIFE  
SHE ALWAYS  
WANTED...

WE  
FOUGHT  
TOGETH-  
ER...

WE ALWAYS  
STOOD UP TO  
HARDSHIPS  
TOGETHER...



THAT'S  
HOW I  
KNOW  
...

MOM-  
MY...



I CAN'T  
PROVE IT,  
BUT I'M  
CERTAIN.

I'M A  
MOTHER.



THAT  
YOU'RE  
NOT MY  
DAUGH-  
TER.



IT'S  
LIKE A  
POWER-  
FUL  
SPELL  
THAT  
BINDS  
EVEN  
FATE.



THE  
BOND  
OF  
MOTHER  
AND  
CHILD

YES...I  
KNOW  
THAT,  
TOO.



IT'S  
TOO  
BAD



IF IT WERE  
POSSIBLE.

I WOULD  
HAVE  
RATHER  
NOT  
MADE  
YOU  
UNHAPPY

MOM-  
MY...

YOU  
CAN'T

...

...





YOU'RE  
RIGHT...  
WE FOUGHT  
TOGETHER!

BUT...

I THOUGHT  
NOW THAT  
MY ILLNESS  
WAS FINALLY  
CURED,  
I COULD  
RETURN THE  
FAVOR FOR  
EVERYTHING  
YOU'VE DONE  
FOR ME!

W  
A  
H  
H  
H  
H  
H  
!

A  
H  
H

THAT  
I'M SOME  
IMPOSTOR  
WHO'S  
NOT YOUR  
DAUGHTER?!

HOW CAN  
YOU BE SO  
OBSESSED  
WITH THIS  
DELUSION...

WHAT  
?

I  
ALWAYS...  
NEEDED  
A LOT OF  
CARE AS  
A CHILD,  
DIDN'T  
I...

YOU  
WANT  
TO BE  
NEEDED  
AS A  
MOTHER,  
SO YOU  
CAN'T  
ACCEPT  
ME NOW  
THAT I'M  
INDEPEN-  
DENT!

I'M  
SURE...  
YOU  
WANT TO  
THINK  
OF ME  
AS BEING  
A LITTLE  
GIRL  
FOREVER  
...



I WAS  
PLAYING IN  
THE RIVER,  
AND THE  
CURRENT  
SWEEPED MY  
FEET OUT  
FROM  
UNDER  
ME.

THAT'S  
RIGHT,  
ONCE IN  
ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL,  
WE ALL  
WENT ON  
A TRIP...

IT  
WASN'T  
JUST MY  
HEALTH.

I WAS A  
CRYBABY,  
AND I'D  
GET INTO  
TROUBLE  
...



I HIT A  
ROCK,  
AND THIS  
SCAR HAS  
REMAINED  
HERE  
SINCE  
THEN.



YOU  
DON'T  
EVEN RE-  
MEMBER  
THIS,  
MOMMY?





IT'S  
CALLED  
CAPGRAS  
DELUSION,  
AND IT'S  
REAL.

HAVING  
A DELUSION  
THAT  
SOMEONE  
CLOSE TO  
YOU HAS BEEN  
REPLACED  
BY SOMEONE  
IDENTICAL  
TO THEM...

YES...



IT'S  
JUST A  
POSSI-  
BILITY,  
RIGHT  
NOW...

N-  
NO  
...

YOUR  
WIFE,  
THOUGH?



WHY DON'T  
YOU TRY  
GETTING HER  
DIAGNOSED?

IF YOU  
LIKE, I COULD  
INTRODUCE  
YOU TO A  
DOCTOR WHO  
HAS TREATED  
SIMILAR  
PATIENTS.

IT'S  
RARE,  
BUT  
THERE  
HAVE  
BEEN  
CASES IN  
JAPAN.

THE  
MORE  
SHE  
STRUG-  
GLES,  
THE  
MORE  
SHE BE-  
COMES  
ENTAN-  
GLED.

YOU  
POINTED  
A KNIFE  
AT YOUR  
OWN  
DAUGH-  
TER!

HOW  
COULD  
YOU  
BE  
SANE  
?

P-  
PLEASE  
!

BELIEVE  
ME!

I'M  
SANE!

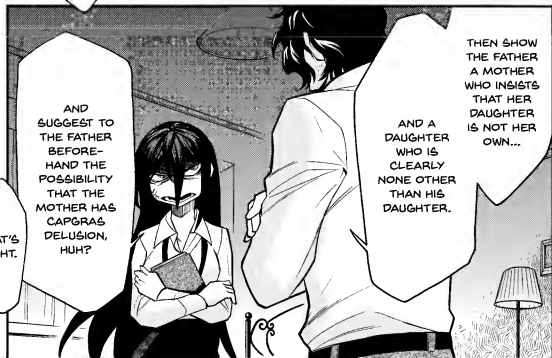
DIAG-  
NOSED?



PUSH THE  
MOTHER  
UNTIL SHE  
ADMITS HER  
SUSPICIONS  
TOWARD  
YOU.



THAT  
CAN'T  
BE  
...



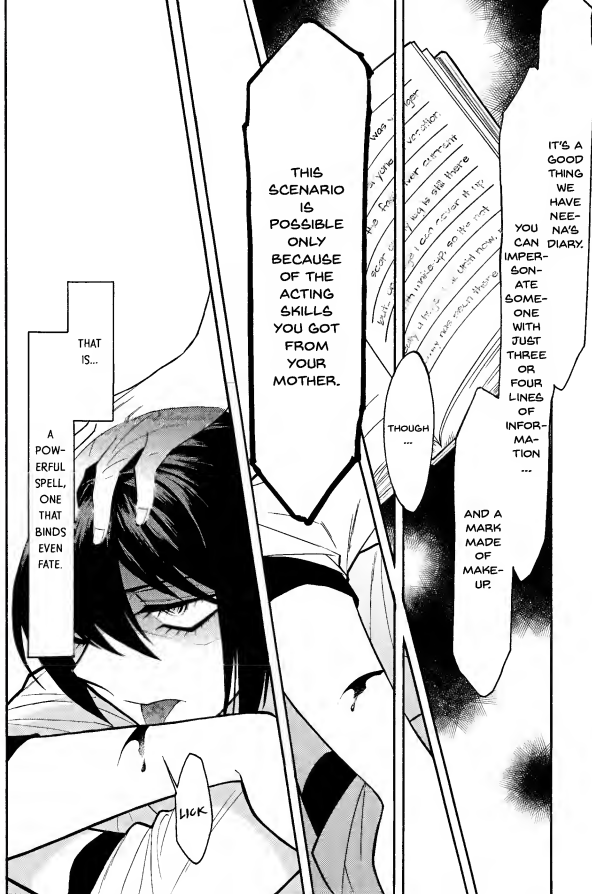
THAT'S  
RIGHT.

AND  
SUGGEST TO  
THE FATHER  
BEFORE-  
HAND THE  
POSSIBILITY  
THAT THE  
MOTHER HAS  
CAPGRAS  
DELUSION,  
HUH?

AND A  
DAUGHTER  
WHO IS  
CLEARLY  
NONE OTHER  
THAN HIS  
DAUGHTER.

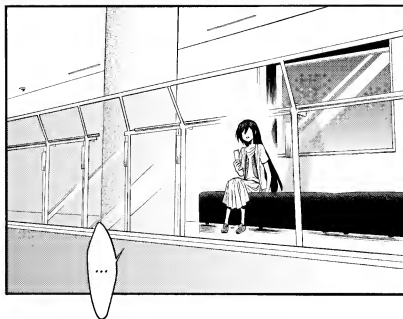
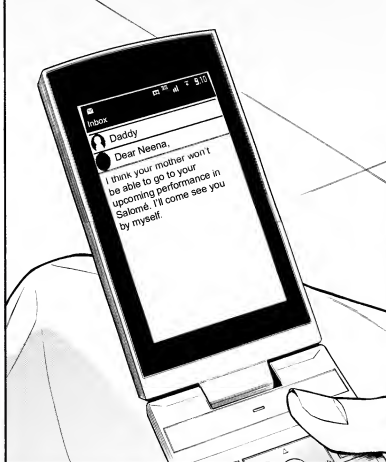
THEN SHOW  
THE FATHER  
A MOTHER  
WHO INSISTS  
THAT HER  
DAUGHTER  
IS NOT HER  
OWN...







Chapter Twenty-Six: Light that Stands Apart



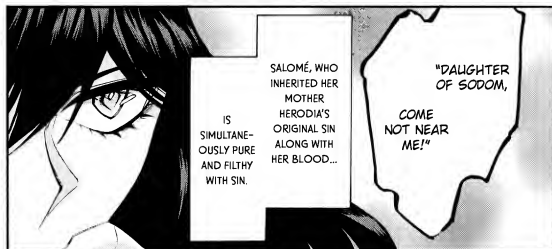


"THY  
MOTHER  
HATH  
FILLED  
THE  
EARTH  
..."

THE  
PERFOR-  
MANCE  
IS ONLY  
TWO  
DAYS  
FROM  
NOW.

"WITH  
THE  
WINE  
OF HER  
INQUI-  
TIES."

"BACK,  
DAUGH-  
TER OF  
BABY-  
LON!"



IS  
SIMULTANE-  
OUSLY PURE  
AND FILTHY  
WITH SIN.

SALOMÉ, WHO  
INHERITED HER  
MOTHER  
HERODIA'S  
ORIGINAL SIN  
ALONG WITH  
HER BLOOD...

"DAUGHTER  
OF SODOM,  
  
COME  
NOT NEAR  
ME!"





SA-  
LOME."

"THOU ART  
ACCURSED,



"THOU ART  
ACCURSED."



?

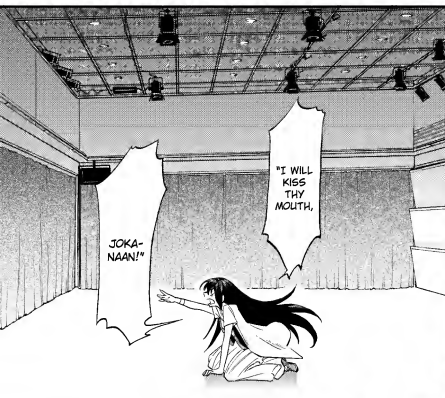


A-ARE  
YOU  
OKAY,  
NEENA-  
SAN?

Y-YES.

TUMP

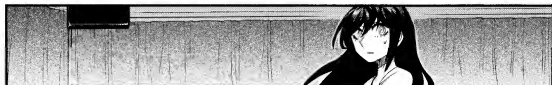
SWAY



THOU ART  
ACCURSED.



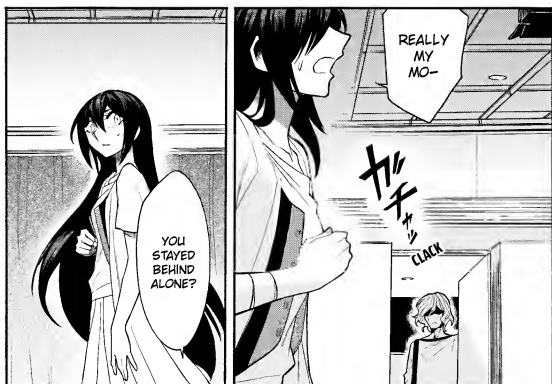
THOU ART  
ACCURSED,  
SALOMÉ.



BUT...

YES...  
I'M  
CURSED,  
TOO.









BECAUSE  
YOU WERE  
SO OUT  
OF IT  
TODAY, YOU  
WOULDN'T  
THINK THE  
PERFOR-  
MANCE  
WAS TWO  
DAYS  
AWAY.

WHAT?  
COME TO  
COMPLAIN  
ABOUT MY  
PERFOR-  
MANCE IN  
PRACTICE?

OH?  
WORRIED  
ABOUT  
IT?



REASONS  
SOMEONE LIKE  
YOU COULDN'T  
UNDERSTAND.

I HAVE MY  
REASONS.



LEAVE  
ME  
ALONE!

I'LL  
FIGURE  
IT OUT  
BEFORE  
THE PER-  
FORMANCE!

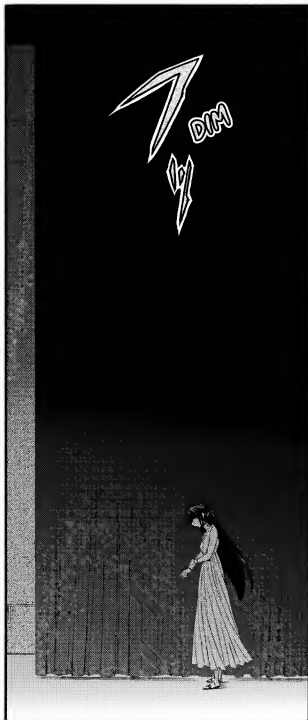
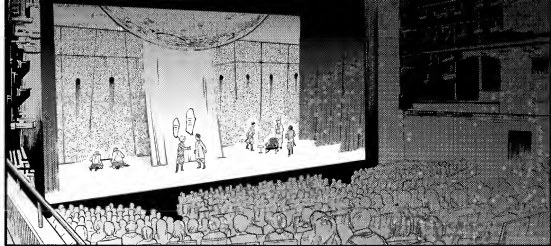
FOR SELF-  
INVOLVED  
REASONS  
THAT  
"NO ONE  
WOULD  
UNDER-  
STAND"?

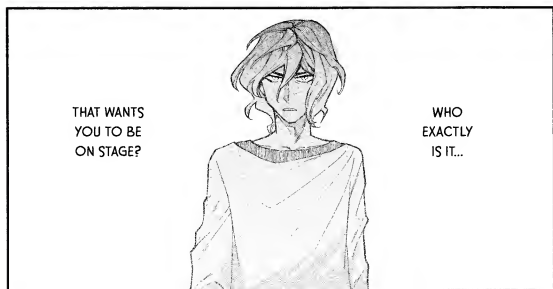
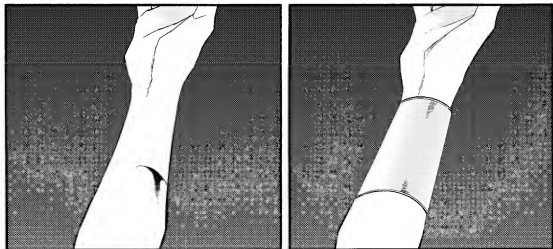
DO YOU  
INTEND TO  
CAUSE A  
MESS FOR  
EVERYONE  
INVOLVED  
WITH THIS  
PLAY...





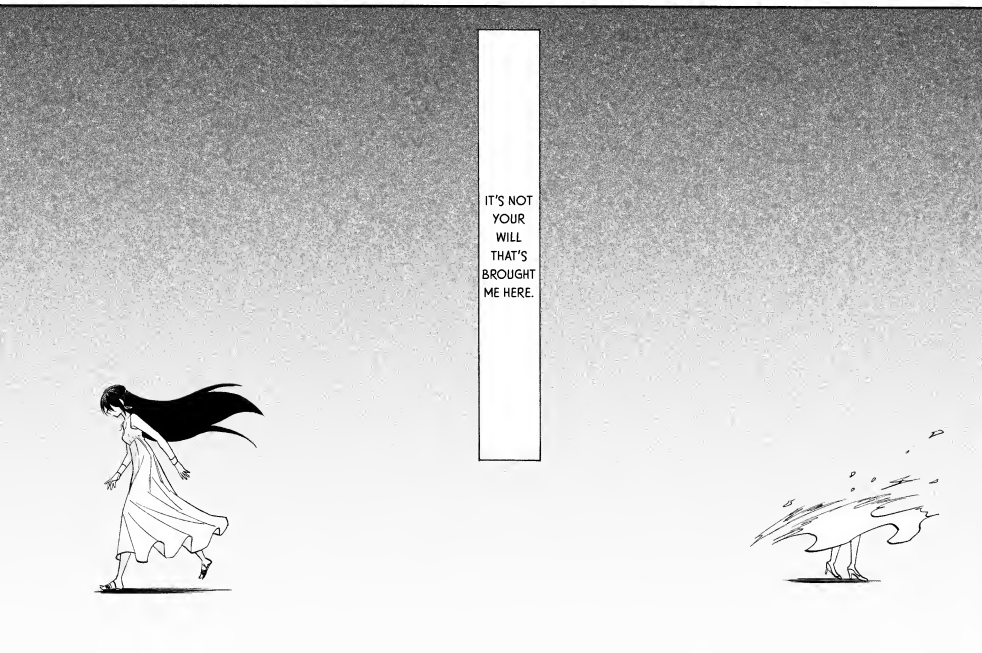
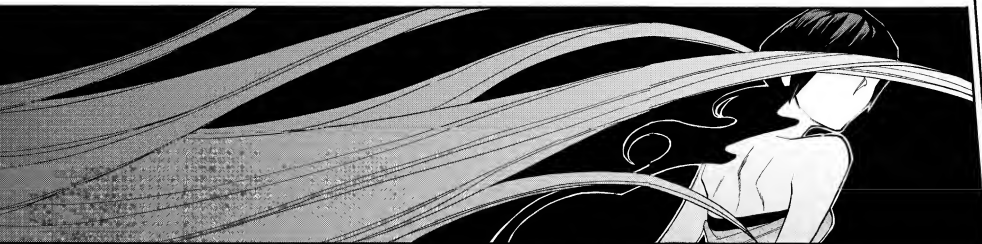








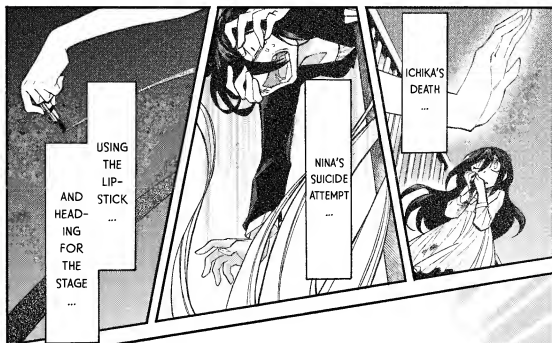




IT'S NOT  
YOUR  
WILL  
THAT'S  
BROUGHT  
ME HERE.



I'M SURE YOU'RE JUST AN ILLUSION, COME FROM MY GUILT FOR MY DESIRES.



IF IT  
CAN  
GET  
THESE  
LIGHTS  
WITHIN  
MY  
GRASP,

NO  
MATTER  
HOW  
DIRTIED  
WITH  
SIN I  
BE-  
COME,





CRAWL-  
ING UP  
OF MY  
OWN  
WILL.

I KNOW  
NOT  
WHAT IT  
MEANS."

"IT IS  
STRANGE  
THAT THE  
HUSBAND  
OF MY  
MOTHER  
LOOKS AT  
ME LIKE  
THAT.

"I WILL  
NOT STAY.  
I CANNOT  
STAY.

WHY  
DOES THE  
TETRARCH  
LOOK AT  
ME ALL THE  
WHILE WITH  
HIS MOLE'S  
EYES UNDER  
HIS SHAKING  
EYELIDS?"

INTO  
THE  
LIGHTS  
...

THEN I  
WILL RISE  
FROM THE  
DEPTHS...



HEH  
HEH.  
THE  
WHOLE  
ATMO-  
SPHERE  
OF THE  
THEATER  
HAS  
CHANGED.

AND  
EVEN  
WITH-  
OUT  
LOOKING,  
I CAN  
SENSE  
THE  
PRIDE  
IN HER  
VOICE.

YOU'VE  
TRANS-  
FORMED,  
NEENA  
TANZAWA.

SO  
YOU'RE  
THE  
KIND  
OF PERSON  
WHO CAN  
ONLY EVER  
BE ALIVE  
ON STAGE,  
TOO, HUH?



# ABOUT KASANE FUCHI



Now then, about Kasane ...



Ultimately, it's just a motif.

This story is based on the motif of a ghost story from the Edo period.

First of all, thank you for buying volume three.

HYAAA  
HA  
HA  
HA  
HA!

EEEEH  
HEH  
HEH  
GAGLE  
GAGLE

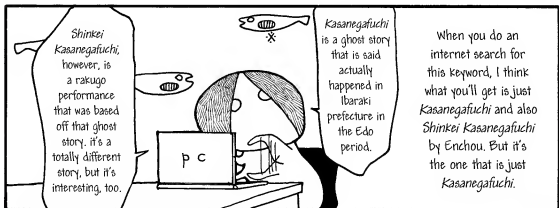
Good evening everyone, (currently 3AM)  
I'm Daruma Matsuura.

I'm drinking that and drawing this.



THAT STORY IS KNOWN AS KASANEGAFUCHI.

Ohh.



Shinkei Kasanegafuchi, however, is a rakugo performance that was based off that ghost story. It's a totally different story, but it's interesting, too.

Kasanegafuchi is a ghost story that is said actually happened in Ibaraki prefecture in the Edo period.

When you do an internet search for this keyword, I think what you'll get is just Kasanegafuchi and also Shinkei Kasanegafuchi by Enchou. But it's the one that is just Kasanegafuchi.

\* I started keeping medaka fish.



Apparently, it was the ghost of Kasane, who was Youemon's (Kasane's father's) previous wife. He had killed her because she was ugly and unpleasant.

If thou shouldst approach, I would bite you to death!



Oh, no! What to do?

FLAIL

ばいん

In Hanyuu village, Shimosa province, a girl named Kiku was possessed by a malicious spirit named Kasane, and the spirit began venting all its resentments.

I'll give you a very casual summary of the tale.



It hurts! (Kiku)

Ahhh! Bread!

Ahhh! Forgive me!

Ahhh! Murderer!

Go buy me some bread!

Sei-san from the next village over witnessed you doing it!

Yocchan, don't you feign ignorance!

My limited page count has made the story rather silly. I apologize. There's a book where you can read more, and it's quite interesting, so if you're interested, please do read it.

Now then, see you again after volume four.

and there's also a memorial for her in Yuuterji in Tokyo as well. (I visited it.)

Kasane's grave is in Houzouji in Ibaraki,

My source is a book called *Recorded stories of liberating dead spirits.* (A version translated into modern Japanese is available.)



※ There's a little more after this, but I'll abridge it.

However, a high priest named Yuuten heard of this incident and came running to the scene. With his mysterious powers, he released Kasane, Kiku went back to normal, and they all lived happily ever after.

Not unless you build a Buddha statue of meee!

Leave!



## **Kasane 3**

KODANSHA COMICS Digital Edition

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